A PARAPHRASE AND COMMENT UPON THE Epiſtles *and* Goſpels,

Appointed to be Uſed in the

Church of *ENGLAND*

ON ALL

SUNDAYS and HOLY-DAYS

Throughout the Year.

Deſigned to Excite Devotion, and Promote the Knowledge and Practice of Sincere Piety and Virtue.

VOL. II.

Beginning with the Firſt Sunday after Epiphany.

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A PARAPHRASE and COMMENT Upon all the Epiſtles and Goſpels, Uſed throughout the Year.

VOL. II.

The Firſt Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, we beſeech thee mercifully to receive the Prayers of thy People which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and alſo may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfil the ſame, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Rom. xii. 2. *Coloſſ.* i. 9. *Phil.* ii. 13. *Hebr.* xiii. 21.

The EPISTLE.

Rom. xii. 1.

I Beſeech you therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reaſonable Service.

PARAPHRASE.

1. Since then the Goodneſs of God is ſo exceeding great, as the former part of this Epiſtle hath ſhewed (in making all Men capable of Salvation by the Righteouſneſs of Faith, delivering us from the rigour and Bondage of the Law, and admitting Gentiles as well as Jews to be Partakers of the Goſpel-Covenant) let me conjure you, by this Goodneſs, to offer and dedicate to God your Perſons, a living (inſtead of the formerly dead) Sacrifice, a pure, and holy, (as thoſe were without blemiſh) and acceptable (for its own ſake, which thoſe were not;) for this will be an Oblation of a rational, as thoſe were of brute and irrational Creatures; and proceeds upon rational Motives.

2. The manner of doing this, must be by renouncing the sinful Affections and Customs of the Men of this World; and being changed into new Men, by pure and spiritual Affections; that so ye may discern, and delight in, and practise those Precepts of substantial and complete Holiness enjoined by the Gospel. And in order hereunto,

2. *And be not conformed to this World, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God.*

3. For I (by virtue of that Authority reposed in me, as the Apostle of Christ) do admonish each of you, not to set too high a Value upon himself, nor to despise others, but to be content with that Part and Station, which the Providence of God, and the Gifts vouchsafed him, have allotted to his share.

3. *For I say, through the Grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of Faith.*

4. For, as it is in the Natural, so is it likewise in the Mystical Body:

4. *For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same Office;*

5. There the Members are many, but united under one Head, and mutually related to each other: Here again, the Persons are many, but all united in Christ; and, though some be higher and some lower, some more and some less active and honourable; yet still this Difference of Place and Office does not hinder the mutual Relation that there is, and the mutual Help and Usefulness that there ought to be, even between those that are most distant in either of the respects abovementioned.

5. *So we being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.*

COMMENT.

THE Church, when appointing this Portion of Scripture, treads exactly in the Steps of the Blessed Apostle that wrote it. He, in the foregoing Chapters, had vindicated, explained, and given due Honour to the Wisdom and the Mercies of God, manifested in the glorious Privileges and universal Extent of the Gospel Dispensation; and now proceeds to shew, what the Effect of these Considerations ought to be, upon the Minds and Lives of all who have embraced it. She, in like manner, from celebrating the Goodness of that God, in the Conversion

verſion of, and Manifeſtation of his Son and his Truth to, the Gentiles; makes it her next Care to preſs the ſame practical Doctrine, and thereby to inſinuate the abſolute Neceſſity of *walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called. I beſeech you therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God*, &c. Epheſ. iv. 1.

That Holineſs, and Virtue, and *every good Word and Work* abounding in us, ought to be the Fruit of our clearer Knowledge; and, that the *Mercies of God* exhibited to Chriſtians are a Motive, not only proper and natural, but ſufficiently ſtrong for that purpoſe, hath, I hope, been plainly and largely enough demonſtrated in a late Diſcourſe. *Epiſt. for Epiph.* The Chapter now before us is deſigned to ſpecifie the particular good Qualities they are expected to produce: which the Apoſtle hath here ſo artfully illuſtrated, that it may very well be looked upon as a perfect, though ſo ſhort, a Body of Chriſtian Morality. The explaining and urging theſe ſeveral Duties, as they deſerve, is an Attempt at preſent impracticable; it being inconſiſtent with the Bounds that ought to be ſet to Meditations of this kind. But, in regard S. *Paul* reminds us of one Conſideration, from whence an Obligation follows to every one (I think) of the Virtues here enjoined; I will make it my Endeavour ſo to inſiſt upon That, as to anſwer the End at leaſt, though I do not induſtriouſly treat of every part, of the Chapter.

This Method I the rather chooſe, becauſe, in other parts of the New Teſtament, we find the ſame Argument ſo frequently and ſolemnly inſiſted on, as to prove the weight of it: and withal, upon ſuch Occaſions, and to ſuch Purpoſes, as ſeem abundantly to juſtifie the Conſequences I am about to draw from it. This will appear to any, who ſhall diligently compare this *Twelfth* to the *Romans*, with *that* of the

1 Cor. xii. Ephes. iv.

first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, and the *fourth* to the *Ephesians*: which Passages I shall, as I find occasion, call in to my Assistance, for the better illustrating and enforcing that which I am now taking in hand.

The Foundation then of my Discourses, upon the Epistles for This and the Two following Sundays, shall be laid in these Words at the *fourth* and *fifth* Verses: *For as we have many Members in one Body, and all Members have not the same office; so we being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.* That these Words have a Retrospect to, and are a Reason for the Duties that went before, is plain by the Connexion of the *fourth* with the *third* Verse, and the Division of the Epistle of the Day, which they close up. That they are manifestly the Ground of those that follow, is clear from the Beginning of the *sixth* Verse; and may be yet more so, from the Reason of the Thing.

Now the Improvement I design to make of this Passage, will fall under the two following Heads:

First, The Nature of this Union and mutual Relation declared here.

Secondly, The Obligations arising from thence upon the Parties so united and related.

1. *First*, The Nature of this Union and mutual Relation declared here, will be best discerned by the several Passages of Scripture making mention of it. The principal whereof, besides that we are now treating of, are these that follow: *As the*

1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 14.

Body is one, and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body, being many, are one Body; so also is Christ: for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one Member, but many. Now ye are

Vers. 27.

the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular. The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt? For we being many, are one Bread and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread. God hath put all things under his (Chriſt's) *feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fullneſs of him that filleth all in all. That the Gentiles ſhould be Fellow-heirs, and of the ſame Body, and Partakers of his Promiſe in Chriſt, by the Goſpel. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. That we may grow up into him in all things which is the Head, even Chriſt: from whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe in the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love: for we are Members one of another. The Head of every Man is Chriſt. Chriſt is the Head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the Body. For we are Members of his Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones.* So again, *He is the Head of the Body, the Church:* whoſe Doctrine and Unity they who depart from, are ſaid not to *hold the Head, from which all the Body, by joints and bands having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.*

1 Corinth. x. 16, 17.

Eph. i. 22, 23.

Chap. iii. 6.

Chap. iv. 4, 5, 6.

Verſ. 15, 16.

Verſ. 24.

1 Cor. xi. 3.

Epheſ. v. 23.

Verſ. 30.

Coloſ. i. 18.

Chap. ii. 19.

I have choſen to ſet theſe ſeveral Texts before you in one view, by reaſon of the mutual Illuſtration they give to each other; and that from all, thus taken and compared together, the Inferences may more eaſily be drawn, which are neceſſary for eſta-

bliſhing the Point now in hand: In particular, What ſort of Union this we are ſpeaking of is, What are the Grounds or Bands of it, and How the Metaphor is anſwered by the mutual relation between the ſeveral parts concerned in the Similitude.

1. As *Firſt*, No doubt at all can be made, but that This, above all other Alluſions, was intended to figure the near, the inſeparable, the entire Concern and Intereſt we have, in our Bleſſed Lord, and in one another. When called Fellow-Souldiers, we are repreſented, as ſo many engaged in the ſame common Cauſe, and liſted to ſerve under the ſame Leader: When Fellow-Servants, as belonging to the ſame Family: When Sons, as deſcended from one Father: When Heirs, as partaking in the Rights and Claims of the ſame elder Brother: But, when Members of the ſame Body, this is the cloſeſt of all the reſt; for it ſcarce leaves us the liberty, which all the reſt do, of conſidering our ſelves any longer as diſtinct Perſons. It preſents us with an Image of every one thus cemented being a part of Chriſt, and every Chriſtian a part of our own ſelves; as if He without Us, and We without Them, muſt want that perfection of Being which the Nature of a Body requires.

2. *Secondly*, It is very manifeſt from hence, that this Union is peculiar to Chriſtians. From whence it is, that we find the Church ſo often mentioned as Chriſt's Body; and conſequently, as They who are not of the Church are not of the Body, ſo what Methods ſoever thoſe be, which have been inſtituted, as Inſtruments and Means for grafting Men into, or ſignifying their Continuance and common Rights in the Congregation of Chriſtians, the ſame make them Members of, and the Denial or the want of the ſame exclude them from any part in, this Body.

3. Hence it comes to paſs, *Thirdly*, that, in the Paſſages above cited, we find ſuch expreſs Mention,

not

not only of the ſame Principles of Religion, the ſame Laws, the ſame Privileges of Grace, the ſame Hopes of Glory; But of the ſame Sacraments too, as neceſſary Atteſtations of our confeſſing and ſubmitting to the former, and entitling us to a reaſonable Expectance of the latter. For nothing leſs than this can be the meaning of thoſe Texts,

One Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm. Epheſ. iv. 5.
By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, 1 Cor. xii. 13.
and have been all made to drink into one Spirit: and, *We being many are one Bread,* Chap. x. 17.
and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.

So vain and preſumptuous is the Deluſion of thoſe, who, becauſe they call Chriſt Lord, and profeſs to believe the Doctrine he hath taught, arrogate to themſelves the Name and Privileges of Chriſtians, without that initiating Sacrament of Baptiſm, which he hath ordained as the Inſtrument of making them Members of his viſible Body. So profane, ſo pernicious, is the Neglect of that other confirming Sacrament, the Bleſſed Supper of our Lord, ordained by him likewiſe for their Strength and Nouriſhment, and neceſſary to preſerve them true Members of his Inviſible Body.

4. For it is fit we be put in mind, *Fourthly*, that it is one thing to have the Appearance and external Privileges, and another to diſcharge the part, and attain all the Benefits, of this Union. As the Apoſtle ſays, in a like caſe, *All are not Iſrael that are of Iſrael*; ſo our Saviour ſuppoſes, that *many who call him Lord will not do the things which he commands.* Rom. ix. 6. Luke vi. 46.

Now Matters are in ſome proportion with this myſtical, as with our natural Body. An Arm, or a Leg may be ſtupified with a Palſie or a Lethargy, an Eye may be out, or an Ear deaf; and theſe ſtill keep their Place, though not their Uſe, in the Body. And

thus a number of careleſs, or profane, or hypocritical Profeſſors, ſhall retain the Name, and fill up the room of Members, by virtue of thoſe outward Signs and Sacraments, which placed them in the Body of Chriſt; while yet they want that inward Holineſs, which thoſe Sacraments are Emblems of, and Engagements to, which alone can render them of a piece with the Head, and wherein not only the Health, but the very Life of the Body, and each Member of it, conſiſts. And becauſe this conſiſts chiefly in the Diſpoſition of the Mind; and conſequently may be ſometimes greater than appears, and at other times may by a falſe and pompous ſhew be made to appear where it really is not: Hence it muſt needs follow, that many may and ought to enjoy the Privileges and the common Eſtimation of Members, who ſtrictly are not ſo; Becauſe the Perſons intruſted with the Power of admitting into, and cutting off from this Body, may be impoſed upon by ſuch Diſſimulation, and can only proceed upon outward Appearances. But then it follows too,

2 Tim. ii. 19. That ſince *the Lord knoweth them that are his*, theſe preſumptive Members ſhall certainly be diſowned by, as in truth they are not united to, him. Hence ſo many preſſing Exhortations to Men acknowledged for *Saints*, and *Brethren*, and *Members*, to walk worthy of thoſe Titles; to be in Truth, what they are in Profeſſion, and Shew, and general Repute: Hence that very ſubſtantial Diſtinction of the Viſible and Inviſible Members and Body of Chriſt, and the difference of thoſe Qualifications neceſſary for each. A Diſtinction founded in the nature of things, which cannot be otherwiſe, while this Body upon Earth is compoſed of and govern'd by Men, capable of deceiving, and of being deceived: while this Field muſt be content to hold Tares with the

Matt. xiii. 30. Wheat, till that Harveſt and thoſe Reapers

pers come, who are appointed to make the final Separation.

5. From hence it is evident, *Fifthly*, that a very conſiderable Difference is to be made between the ſeveral Inſtances of Union, mentioned and recommended in Scripture; that Some are abſolutely neceſſary to the Being, Others enjoined as expedient to the Growth and Well-being of this Body. Of the Former ſort are the ſubmitting to the ſame *Lord*, agreeing in the Fundamentals of the ſame *Faith*, and, as a mark of this Submiſſion and Agreement, Adminiſtration of the ſame *Sacraments*. Of the Latter, that Holineſs of Life, that Exemplarineſs of Practice, that mutual Charity and Concord, that Peaceableneſs and Order, that Conſent in Diſcipline, that ready Compliance in all lawful Matters, which, though not eſſential, ſhall yet (by the Conſtitution of particular Churches, and the Judgment of Perſons thought proper to give Rules in ſuch Caſes) be enjoined, as proper for Decency and Edification. Which Authority, being derived from our Lord upon his Apoſtles, and from them upon their Succeſſors, in the Government of this Society ſo incorporated; the Contempt of It is a Contempt of Him, and a Breach of that Union, which every Chriſtian is bound to preſerve, under all the Penalty thoſe Declarations of our Maſter can be ſuppoſed to involve every wilful Violater of it in: *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you:* and, *He that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* John xx. 21. Luke x. 16.

6. But that part of this Union which we are in a more eſpecial manner concerned to obſerve, is, *Sixthly*, that between All theſe Members and Chriſt, whom we find, in the Texts above cited, to be repreſented as their common Head. And this Reſemblance is made good, with Alluſion to our Natural Body, not meerly

as he took upon him our humane Nature, and ſo became One with us, and Head over us, in a ſenſe different from that, in which he is ſaid to be the Head over the Angels, or any other Creature: But more eſpecially, in regard of that Order and Preeminence, that Perfection and Power of influencing, that Care of directing, that Right of Governing, that conſtant Protection of, and perpetual Preſence with, the ſeveral Parts of this Myſtical, which anſwer to the Dignity and Excellence, the Communications and continual Diſtributions, the Command, and the Contrivance, and intimate Conjunction of the Head, in the Frame of our Natural Body. Theſe are Particulars, which require the greater Attention, by reaſon of that Uſefulneſs they are of, towards making Men ſenſible, what Duties this Relation obliges to. And therefore it may be convenient to take notice, what Care the Holy Ghoſt hath beſtowed, to explain and illuſtrate them to us in Scripture.

1. As *Firſt*. Our Saviour is very fitly termed our Head, as that implies Dignity of Station, Superiority of Place, and Preheminence over the reſt of the Body. How great Honour we think due to This, above any Other part of our natural Compoſition, no one needs be told; And how deſervedly we think ſo, is very obvious to any, who at all conſider the Nobleneſs of its Contexture, the Richneſs of its Treaſures, the Variety of its Operations. Inſomuch, that all our higheſt Faculties are ſeated here, all the Senſes exerciſed, and all but One, the meaneſt of the number, exerciſed here alone. Upon which, and many other Accounts, it ſeems to claim the Situation Nature gives it, a Preference before, and Preſidence over, the whole Body.

Such and much more wonderful are the Perfections of our myſtical Head; Reſplendent and glorious above all imagination; ſo exquiſite, that the utmoſt

Hap-

Happineſs in reſerve for the beſt and moſt beloved of his Members, is, to be wrought up to ſuch Reſemblance of him, as the infinite Diſtance between God and Man will admit. And in this reſpect the Apoſtle ſeems to have intended that noble Deſcription of his Excellencies; when calling him, *the Image of the Inviſible God, the Firſt-born of every Creature, the Head of the Body, the Church; the Beginning, and the Firſt-born from the Dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence: becauſe it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all Fullneſs dwell.* Col. i. 15, 18, 19.

2. This Union between Chriſt and the Church, is juſtified, *Secondly*, by the ſaving Influences, and perpetual Communications, derived down upon the Body. The Head, in our Natural Frame, is the Store-houſe, the Work-houſe, in which are formed every moment, and laid up for uſe, thoſe animal Spirits, that maintain Life, and Motion, and Senſe. And the conſtant regular Diſtribution of theſe is ſo neceſſary, that if the Paſſages to any Part happen to be intercepted, that Part becomes preſentiy uſeleſs and dead: and if thoſe Stores run low, there follow immediately Faintings and Swoonings, A ſtate of Inactivity for the time; and, without ſeaſonable Recruits, when quite exhauſted, the Death of the Man.

In like manner, with regard to the Principles of our ſpiritual Life, Chriſt is (if I may ſo ſpeak) the common Magazine of all our Powers. *The Head*, ſays St. *Paul*, *from which all the Body, by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtred and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God.* Col. ii. 19. The plain importance whereof is thus much; That, as the natural Body owes its Growth and Vigour to the continual Supplies of Spirits from the Head; and as the Ligatures of Arteries and Veins, Muſcles and Joints, are ſo many Pipes laid each in proper Poſi-

tion,

tion, for conveying theſe into the Limbs, for Strength and Motion, and mutual Eaſe and Help, and for diffuſing of Nouriſhment through the whole Maſs of Fleſh and Blood, according to the Capacity of each Veſſel and Part: So the Church's Health and Increaſe proceed from the kindly Influences, which Chriſt is pleaſed to ſhed down upon it; and the Piety and Charity of Chriſtians are vital Operations, correſponding to, and naturally reſulting from ſuch Influences duly received. Hence S. *John*,

John 1. 16. *Of his Fullneſs have we all received Grace:*

Phil. iv. 13. and S. *Paul*, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me.* And how entirely our Living or Dying, in a Religious Senſe, depends upon ſuch Communications, or the withdrawing of them, our Bleſſed Lord himſelf hath fully acquainted us, in another figurative Illuſtration, exactly parallel to the Point we are now upon. *As the Branch*, ſays he, *cannot bear*

John xv. 4, 5. *fruit of it ſelf, except it abide in the Vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit. For without me ye can do nothing.* What can poſſibly be a more expreſs Proof of the mutual Union, the conſtant Communication between Chriſt and his Church, and conſequently the exceeding fitneſs of this Similitude, proceeding from our Natural to his Myſtical Body? Thus does the Life, and Health, and Strength, and Senſe, and Motion of a Chriſtian, as ſuch, require his benign Influences, as abſolutely needful for their Support and reſpective Functions. Thus are all theſe as certainly interrupted, as effectually deſtroyed, upon the Obſtruction or with-holding of thoſe Influences; as the Man acts, and moves, when his Spirits are liberally and regularly diſpenſed; but falls into a Palſie, or an Apoplexy, faints away and dies, when their

Courſe

Courſe is intercepted and diſturbed, or their Stock ſpent and quite drawh off.

3. The Analogy between Chriſt's Myſtical, and our Natural Body, holds with regard to his Right of directing and governing. The Buſineſs of the Head is to Adviſe and Command; This is the Seat of the Soul; and the ſeveral Faculties of the other Parts are determined by its Appointment. Such is the Authority of our Lord, manifeſt, as from ſundry other Texts, ſo particularly from that to the *Epheſians*: *The Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church; therefore as the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo let the Wives be to their own Husbands in every thing.* Eph. v. 23, 24. But of the Significance of the Figure in this reſpect no Enlargement can be needful, ſince it is ſo univerſally acknowledged, that no Scheme of Speech is either more familiarly uſed, or more perfectly underſtood, than that, whereby ſupreme Governours, in any kind, are ſtiled the Heads of them, who ſubmit to their reſpective Juriſdictions.

4. Once more. The Metaphor is anſwered by his Care for, Protection of, and inſeparable Conjunction with, his Members. For ſuch is the caſe of our natural Head, it contrives for, conſults the Safety of, and lives with the Body. And ſuch is the caſe of our myſtical Head, who is therefore term'd the *Saviour of the Body, the Nouriſher and Cheriſher of the Church.* Eph. v. 23, 30. Hence *Saul*, who *perſecuted the Church*, is accuſed of perſecuting Him; hence we are ſaid to be *made alive in Chriſt*; hence that moſt comfortable Declaration to his Diſciples, *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo*; Acts ix. 4. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Joh. xiv. 19. and that other to his Father, *The glory which thou gaveſt me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one. I in them,*

and

and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: In a word, As the Sufferings and the Benefits, the Safety and the Dangers, in our Perſons, are common to Head and Trunk both, and as the ſevering of theſe two infers the Death of the whole; ſo our Lord permits us to believe all our Intereſts and all our Calamities, all our Comforts and all our Sorrows, His: To promiſe our ſelves Immortality and Glory, becauſe he is already poſſeſs'd of both, not only in his own, but in the right of every actual and true Member of his; and to look upon Him, and his Bliſs, as in ſome ſence imperfect, without the Participation of that *Church which is his Body*; and therefore muſt ſhare the ſame fate with its *Head*, which is *his Fullneſs*, and conſequently not to be parted from him that *filleth all in all.*

The Sum is this. The Alluſion now before us is deſigned to inſinuate the cloſeſt Union to Chriſt, and to One another, that can be; the Latter, by calling us one Body, the Former, by calling us one Body in Him. That thus we are made, by the Profeſſion of one Faith, by partaking of one Spirit, by the Regeneration of one Baptiſm, and by ſubmitting to one Lord. That theſe are neceſſary to the very Being of this Body, and giving Men any place in it: But, that to the well-being of it, a great deal more is neceſſary. The diſcharging thoſe Duties, which that Lord commands, which that Baptiſm engages for, which that Spirit is ready to aſſiſt them in, which that Faith expects, as agreeable Fruits of its Principles. That they who fail in this, are but outwardly and imperfectly, but they who do the part and office of Members, are ſpiritually, actually, and ſavingly united, in the Body of the Saints, to Chriſt their common Head, Deſervedly ſtiled our Head for his excellent Dignity above, for his conſtant and liberal Influences upon, for his commanding Power

over,

over, and for his tender Care of, and Preſence with, the Members of this Body. Such is our Union, Such our mutual Relation; moſt endearing, moſt honourable, moſt happy, provided we be careful to improve upon, and fulfill the Purpoſes of it: In order whereunto it is, that I propoſe under my

II. *Second* Head, To conſider the Obligations ariſing from hence, upon the Parties thus united and related. In this Conſideration my Thoughts muſt be guided by the Particulars, which S. *Paul* hath laid before me: And becauſe theſe are ſet down in great variety, and promiſcuous manner, for the containing what I have to ſay within due Bounds, and treating of the Subjects more diſtinctly, it may be convenient to obſerve the general Topicks of Virtue, to which the Precepts are reducible; and then to treat of thoſe, not in all their Latitude of Obligation, but only ſo far forth, as this Union now in hand is a proper Argument for recommending them to, or binding them upon us.

Now the Portion of this Chapter, at preſent directed to employ our Meditations, mentions Three, which I ſhall endeavour firſt of all to explain, and then to ſhew, how our being Members in the Body of Chriſt enforces the Practice of them: Both, as clearly, and as briefly, as I can.

1. The *Firſt* of theſe is Mortification of our Senſual Appetites, with which St. *Paul* begins his Exhortation, when *beſeeching* theſe *Romans* by *the Mercies of God, to preſent their Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which* (ſays he) *is your reaſonable Service.* Advice, in ſubſtance the ſame with that to the *Epheſians*, on a like occaſion, *I beſeech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called*; to the *Coloſſians*, after declaring our Union with Chriſt, *Mortifie there-*

Verſ. 1.

Eph. iv. 1.

Coloſ. iii. 5.

fore

fore your Members which are on the Earth: the Equity whereof, he had urged upon the *Romans* in the former part of this Epiſtle, *As ye have*
Rom. vi. 19. *yielded your Members Servants to Uncleanneſs, and to Iniquity, unto Iniquity: even ſo now yield your Members Servants to Righteouſneſs, unto Holineſs.* But, though theſe places be in Subſtance the ſame, yet is there a particular Energy in the Expreſſions here before us, which deſerves to be taken notice of.

The Apoſtle had been demonſtrating the Excellence of the Evangelical, above the Legal Inſtitution, and, with Alluſion to the way of Worſhip uſed in that, he adviſes Chriſtians to *preſent a Sacrifice* too: but this conſiſting, not of the Bodies of Beaſts, but their own Bodies. The thing therefore offered here is ſtill alive; and yet there is ſomewhat in the matter, that bears ſome reſemblance and proportion to the ſlaying of Victims heretofore: Becauſe, by ſubduing our vicious Inclinations, which are the Incentives to Impurity and all manner of Wickedneſs, *the body of Sin* (as we find it very fre-
Rom. vi. 6. quently and emphatically called) *is deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin.* By thus *cleanſing our ſelves from all filthineſs*
2 Cor. vii. 1. *both of Fleſh and Spirit*, we anſwer the ſpiritual Intent of that Law, which incapacitated all Beaſts for the uſe of the Altar, wherein any Blemiſh or Defect was diſcovered; and ſo render this *living* a *holy* Sacrifice, qualified for the Acceptance of God; and therefore ſo, becauſe, as the Reaſon of the thing demands it from us, ſo the Value of the Oblation is greatly enhanſed, by being that of a Rational Creature, conſecrated and devoted entirely to his Service, ſeparated from common and profane Uſes, and not, without the guilt of Sacrilege, to be afterwards employed in the Gratification of our own Luſts, when

the

the whole Right of what we bring to God hath been thus ſolemnly transferred from our ſelves to Him.

This is what, in effect, hath been already done, by every Chriſtian, from the moment of his being made ſuch, in the Sacrament of Baptiſm: Wherein we all renounce the *carnal Deſires of the Fleſh, ſo that we will not follow nor be led by them.* A Sacrament *repreſenting to us our Profeſſion, which is to imitate the Example of our Saviour Chriſt, and to be made like unto Him; that, as he died and roſe again for Us, ſo We, who are Baptized,* into the Belief of that Death and Reſurrection, *ſhould die from Sin, and riſe again unto Righteouſneſs, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt Affections, and daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godlineſs of living.* This is an Act of Religion, repeated and confirmed by every one, as oft as he receives that other Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: Where we again *offer and preſent unto God our Selves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reaſonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto him.* In the mean while, though this Dedication convey over the whole of our Perſons, yet was it proper and ſufficient for the Apoſtle to mention the Offering of our *Bodies*; becauſe our Bodies are the Inſtruments of committing thoſe Sins, from which it was intended to debar us: becauſe the ſeeking and Gratification of bodily Pleaſures is the End, which the Appetites puſhing on to thoſe Sins propoſe to themſelves: And therefore, as the Perſons indulging them are very ſignificantly ſaid to *ſin againſt their own Body*; ſo the keeping this Body in Subjection to the reaſonable Mind, and employing it in the Exerciſes of Religion and ſevere Virtue, (by all that Abſtinence, and other Hardſhips and Self-denials, neceſſary for this purpoſe,) is offering not It alone, but our whole ſelves to God. For (as I ſaid) in It the whole Cauſe, and End, and Inſtrument

Bapt. Service.

Communion-Service.

1 Cor. vi. 18.

ſtrument of our Corruption is included; And not to *ſerve the Body*, is, in effect, and certain Conſequence, *not to ſerve Sin.* So that, when this Servant of Sin is it ſelf ſanctified, and devoted a Servant to Righteouſneſs, the very Principle of Moral Actions is changed, the Dominion of Death ſpiritual ſubverted, the Matter, upon which Temptations work, withdrawn,

1 Cor. vi. 20. Rom. vi. 22.

and, by making our *Body* as well as *Spirit God's*, the Fruit is *his Glory* and our own *Holineſs* in both Spirit and Body: which leads me to the *ſecond* thing enjoined;

2. *Newneſs of Heart and Life.* For that's the Subſtance of the next Verſe, *And be not conformed to this World, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God.* Counſel neceſſary to the perfecting that Virtue, which the laſt Particular begins; and both together of a like importance with that to the *Epheſians*,

Verſ. 2.

Epheſ. iv. 22, 23, 24.

That ye put off, concerning the former Converſation, the Old-man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts, and be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind, and that ye put on the New-man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

By the *former Converſation* in the one, and *Conformity to this World* in the other of theſe Texts, is not forbidden all ſort of Compliance with the lawful and innocent Cuſtoms in uſe, (as if it were a Duty in Chriſtians to diſtinguiſh themſelves by a Dreſs or Demeanour fantaſtical and ſingular) but only the not ſuffering our ſelves to give into the falſe Judgments, or the prevailing Faſhions, of the Men of the World, ſo far as any of theſe, either are themſelves, or may to us become the probable occaſion of any thing that is, ſinful. In ſhort, with the Men, who have no view beyond, no Principle of governing their Actions, but the Profits, or Honours, or Pleaſures

ſures of this World, we muſt not conſent in Opinion, we muſt not joyn in Practice; No proſpect of Intereſt, No influence of Example and common Vogue muſt byaſs us, No, not the natural bent of our own mind. But, having entirely offered up our ſelves to God, there is no taking back part, and dividing the Oblation between Him and Mammon. The virtue of that new Turn given to our Thoughts and Affections, and that different Judgment of things, wrought in our Hearts, by the Grace of God, and our own pious Endeavours, will and muſt make us quite another ſort of Men. Creatures as much new and changed, as the Condition of a reaſonable Mind can admit; and ſuch, as for the future allow no rule of Action, no meaſure of Good and Evil, of Wiſdom and Folly, but the Goſpel. Which was intended to compleat our Holineſs, and recommend us effectually to the Favour and Love of God.

3. The *Third* thing we are concerned with, as enjoined in this Day's Epiſtle, is Humility; for this is the Virtue S. *Paul* aims at, when ſaying *to every man, Not to think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but to think ſoberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of Faith.* Theſe Words are by ſome ſuppoſed a Caution againſt Curioſity in matters of Religion, and affecting to be wiſe in unprofitable parts of Knowledge. But it ſeems more agreeable to the Apoſtle's purpoſe, to underſtand that Vanity and Over-valuing of a Man's ſelf, which are ſo very apt to grow upon us, when we feel our ſelves ſuperiour to others, in any ſort of commendable Quality. And ſuch, as were exceeding remarkable in many of the Primitive Church, who were diſtinguiſhed by extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit. And becauſe thoſe Gifts were differently diſtributed, both as to kind and to degree; the Fault and Folly of Mens preferring thoſe of one kind above the reſt, or being

immoderately exalted upon higher, and contemning those who had received lower measures of the same kind, is here condemned and forbidden.

This I conceive to be the meaning of the three foregoing Verses, and these the Virtues press'd upon us in them. It remains only, that I shew how they are enforced, by this Consideration of our being united as one Body in Christ, which a very few Words may suffice to do.

That the *First* of them is so, which consists in mortifying the sensual and carnal Appetites, and consecrating our Bodies to the Service of God, I need no other Proof, than this Apostle's own Authority, who thus endeavours to create in the *Corinthians* a particular Abhorrence of unclean Lusts. *Know ye not,* says he, *that your Bodies are the Members of Christ? Shall I then take the Members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid.* And farther yet, to make them sensible that this Argument ought to take place, not only against the gross Acts of Impurity, but even all Pollution of the Thoughts and Desires; He proceeds, *What, know ye not that He which is joined to an Harlot is one Body? But He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.* You see, by the very manner of the Apostle, how exceeding contrary to, how utterly unbecoming our Character, any sinful Indulgence in carnal Pleasures is. So manifestly thus, That he does not descend to a cool and formal Argument, but turns the matter off with Scorn and Detestation, and represents it so absurd and monstrous, that a Man must be perfectly stupid, not to perceive the horrid Vileness and Incongruity of it.

1 Cor. vi. 15.

Vers. 16, 17.

And sure, if we go to the Reason of the thing, this single Reflection ought to have great weight with us. For, if the Moralists of old could discern the Reasonableness of restraining, denying, despising those

vicious Gratifications, which degrade Us and our Nature; How much more juſt is a Chriſtian's Abſtinence and Diſdain, who cannot debaſe himſelf alone, but at the ſame time he commits an Indignity upon Chriſt? Surely He ought to treat his own Perſon, as a Member belonging to that Head: to reſpect a *Body which is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt:* not to proſtitute a thing ſo ſacred and venerable, to the Filthineſs of Brutes; nor invade the Property of that God, to whom he hath the Honour, by ſo manifold a Title, to belong. 1 Cor. vi. 19.

2. The *Second*, of a *new Heart and Life*, is no leſs evident a Conſequence of this Union. For, ſince *we know that Chriſt abideth in Us, and We in Him, by the Spirit he hath given us*; ſince his Spirit is here diſtinguiſhed from a worldly Spirit, his Kingdom from the Kingdoms of this World; it follows, that to retain the one of theſe, is to declare we have nothing to do with the other; and, that, to make the one our Aim and End, is to abandon the other. As Chriſt is then our Head, with regard to his directive Power, we muſt ſee to the keeping that Correſpondence, which appears in Nature. The ready Conſent of every Faculty to execute what the Head contrives and appoints; the nimble Sallies of our Animal Spirits, that fly, we know not how, as ſwift as Thought, through every Nerve; and inſtantly move the moſt diſtant Limbs of our Bodies, are a lively Emblem of that ready and cheerful Conformity, which ſhould be paid this myſtical Head, in every inſtance of his Will ſignified to us, whether by Precept or his own Example. Hence we are told of every *Thought being brought to the obedience of Chriſt.* That ſo in this, as in our ordinary Compoſition, no ſuch thing as Rebellion may be known. For, if at any time the Dictates of the Soul be not obeyed, this comes to paſs through Weakneſs and Indiſpoſition; ſometimes for want of 2 Cor. x. 5.

Power, but never for want of Will. But, not *to have the like mind in us that was in Christ Jesus*, is to suppose two Spirits, and two contrary Wills, which quite destroys the Notion of one and the same Body. And therefore All, who would maintain this Union, must make His Will Theirs; and have no Opinions, no Affections, no Delights of their own; but in all things be transformed into, and (as the Scripture expresses it) *put on Christ*.

3. Of the *Third*, which is Humility, there can remain no doubt, since this Allusion of a Body is urged by the Apostle, as an express Reason for it. But of this, more hereafter.

The short is. As the Principles of natural Vigour, and Motion, and Sensation, are dispensed from the Head, as from a common Fond, through these Bodies of Flesh: so are the Graces of the Spirit, from Christ. But with this difference, that His Distributions are not mechanical, but voluntary, and entirely free. These therefore are derived down, in such quality and proportion, as his Wisdom sees fit for the common Exigencies and Benefit. They are not the Effect of Ours, but the Overflowings of His Goodness. And therefore our part is, to dispose our selves for giving them a meek and thankful Reception, to improve under them, to admire and adore the Kindness of the Giver: But often to beat down those unseasonable and dangerous Self-complacencies, (which any partial and distinguishing Bounty in our Favour are so ready to blow up,) with a *Who hath made thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou hast not received? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

And especially, It will become us to remember, with great Seriousness, that the Issue, upon which every Christian's Fate will turn at last, is not the Quantity of what he receives, but the Use or the Neglect of it, the

the Anſwering or Defeating the Purpoſes, for which it was beſtowed. Which leads us to another Inference drawn from this Compariſon, and will come under our Conſideration the next Lord's Day. Verſ. 6.

The Firſt Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

S. Luke ii. 41.

41. *NOW his Parents went to Jeruſalem every Year at the Feaſt of the Paſſover.*
42. *And when he was twelve Years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the Cuſtom of the Feaſt.*

PARAPHRASE.

41, 42. His Parents diligently obſerved that Law, which expreſly required the Attendance of all the Males at *Jeruſalem*, to celebrate three ſolemn Feaſts every Year, of which the Paſſover was one. See *Exod.* xxiii. 15, 17. *Levit.* xxiii. *Deut.* xvi. Upon which occaſion the Females (though not expreſſed) were not excluded, but frequently attended alſo: And their Children, when capable of underſtanding the Intent of thoſe Feſtivals, were bound to it.

43. *And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem, and Joſeph and his Mother knew not of it.*

43. This Solemnity laſted ſeven days, at the expiration whereof, *Joſeph* and *Mary* began their Journey back to *Nazareth*.

44. *But they, ſuppoſing him to have been in the company, went a days Journey; and they ſought him among their Kinsfolk and among their Acquaintance.*

45. *And when they found him not, they turned back to Jeruſalem, ſeeking him.*

45. Not hearing of him upon the Enquiry made, (*Ver.* 44.) the ſecond day they went back.

46. *And it came to paſs, that after three days they found him in the Temple, ſitting in the midſt of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them Queſtions.*
47. *And all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his Underſtanding and Anſwers.*

46, 47. The third day (computed from their ſetting out homeward) they found him in that part of the Temple, where the Learned in the Law uſed to teach, and expound publickly, With whom he conferred, to the Admiration of all People preſent.

48. This was a ſight very ſurprizing to them; and his Mother, out of the vehemence of her Affection, expoſtulated with him about what had paſſed.

48. *And when they ſaw him they were amazed; and his Mother ſaid unto him, Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy Father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing.*

49. To whom his Anſwer was, That a Son was no where ſo properly as in his Father's Houſe, nor ſo fitly employed, as about his Father's Affairs.

49. *And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not, that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?*

50. The meaning of this Anſwer they did not perfectly comprehend.

50. *And they underſtood not that Saying which he ſpake unto them.*

51. Hereupon he bore them company home, and ſubmitted to their Authority, like common Sons. But none of theſe things paſſed without the particular obſervation and remembrance of his Mother.

51. *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them. But his Mother kept all theſe Sayings in her heart.*

52. Mean while Jeſus grew in his Mind to maturity of Judgment, as well as in his Body to the full proportion of a Man, by gradual and viſible acceſſions of both; like other Youths: And behaved himſelf ſo, as to engage the general Love and Approbation of all ſorts of People.

52. *And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and Man.*

COMMENT.

THE Goſpel for this Day deſerves our very particular Conſideration, becauſe containing all the Account thought fit by the Holy Ghoſt to be given us of our Bleſſed Saviour's Life, from his Infancy, to his Baptiſm, and the Entrance upon his Prophetick Office. A little compaſs of Words for ſo long a tract of time; and chiefly confined to one ſingle Occaſion: But That ſuch, as furniſhes a great deal of matter for uſeful Reflection and Practice. And to theſe purpoſes it ſhould be our endeavour to improve it, with regard to the following Inſtances particularly.

1. The *Forty-firſt* and *Forty-ſecond* Verſes take notice, how religiouſly *Joſeph* and *Mary* obſerved the Paſſover; that the diſtance of their dwelling did not hinder

hinder their reſorting to *Jeruſalem* yearly, for the Celebration of it; that in this *Mary* joyned too, though not obliged to it by the Letter of the Law: and that, when *Jeſus* arrived at the Age of *Twelve Years*, he was taken thither with them. What Obligations they lay under for their own Attendance, the Texts referred to in the Paraphraſe ſhew. The carrying up of *Jeſus* ſeems to have had more immediate reſpect to thoſe Ordinances, which required all *Iſraelites* to inſtruct their Children diligently in the Knowledge of the Law: and eſpecially, in the Reaſons for which the Paſſover, and the reſt of their great Solemnities, were inſtituted.

Exod. xii. 25—29. Ch. xiii. 8—11. Deut. vi. &c.

Now the *Virgin* and *Joſeph*, by their punctual Compliance in both theſe Caſes, have ſet an excellent Example to Parents of all Ages and Places; An Example, which, grounded on the expreſs Command of God, ſhould make them ſenſible, of how great importance it is, That They, who govern Families, be conſcientious in frequenting God's publick Worſhip themſelves: That they go before their Children, and by their own Behaviour encourage them to follow, in the ways of Piety and Virtue: That they ſeaſon their tender years with early Notions of Good and Evil, let them in to a right underſtanding of Religion, by ſuch Methods, and in ſuch Degrees, as the Greenneſs of that Age is capable of. Particularly, (which comes neareſt to the Caſe before us) to turn all their Childiſh Curioſity to Profit, by explaining to them the Occaſion of the Chriſtian Feſtivals; begetting in them an early Reverence for the glorious Myſteries, and a becoming Value for the invaluable Benefits, of our Redemption. In ſhort, that they would, from the very firſt, make them their Companions in the Service of God, and imprint upon this ſoft Wax ſuch ſtrong and laſting Characters of his

Majeſty

Majeſty and Goodneſs, ſuch an habitual Awe and Love of Him and his Commands, as may ſerve for a Foundation to build a wiſe and holy Life upon. Such as may preſerve their riper years from the Contagion of Irreligion and Vice, direct their Choice, and ſecure their Perſeverance, by Habits of Goodneſs, and exemplary Improvements in Religious Prudence, ſtill aſpiring nearer Perfection to the End of their days.

2. The *Three* following Verſes take notice of *Jeſus* ſtaying behind, and the anxious Concern of his Parents upon that occaſion. Which Some have imputed to a Fear of his falling into ill hands, who, by deſtroying him, might defeat the Expectation of the glorious things God ſent him into the World to accompliſh. But I conceive it much more reaſonable, to aſcribe that Concern to the natural Tenderneſs of a Mother, and the Frights and Confuſions, which the miſſing a beloved Child, in whoſe Company they above all things delighted, uſes to produce upon ſo unexpected an Accident. And the Duty I would recommend from hence is, Kindneſs and Affection to our Children, a quick and tender Senſe of their Sufferings and Dangers, and a very ſollicitous Care for their Safety and Happineſs.

I know not well, what may at firſt be thought, of my pretending ſo ſolemnly to excite a Diſpoſition, which Nature ſeems to have provided effectually for already, by planting it even in the fierceſt and wildeſt of Beaſts. It hath indeed done this, and in ſuch manner, that thoſe very Brutes are a Reproach to many Men, who behave themſelves, as if Reaſon were given to harden their Hearts, and render them but ſo much leſs gentle and ſenſible. For it is really prodigious to ſee, how ſome, even who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, can lay aſide all Bowels, and forget every thing of Care and Compaſſion for their own Fleſh: ſuch Indifference, ſuch Stupidity, nay ſuch remorſleſs

Cruelties,

Cruelties, ſuch Blows, ſuch Revilings, ſuch bitter Curſes, heard and ſeen betwixt the neareſt Relations, as would even tempt us to ſuſpect the power of Reaſon and Religion, for working us into ſofter and better Tempers; had not Chriſt and his Apoſtles foretold, *that in the laſt days*, ſome ſhould Matth. x. 21. ſo obſtinately ſtand it out againſt the force of both, as *to hate* and *betray* their Ch. xxiv. 12. own Off-ſpring, to become *cold in love*, 2 Tim. iii. 2. and abſolutely *void of natural affection*.

But, when foretelling this, they ſignifie withal, that the *abounding of Iniquity* is the Cauſe of it, and that thoſe are the very Dregs of Time, by giving the Coming of ſuch things to paſs, for a Mark of the worſt, as well as the laſt Days. Since then ſuch unnatural things are practicable however, and plainly poſſible at leaſt, it cannot misbecome me to preſs a Duty, which, though Nature hath univerſally implanted a Diſpoſition to, yet the Corruption of Humane Nature hath the ſcandal of being too often proof againſt. And indeed I the rather chooſe to recommend this Tenderneſs for our Children, ſo remarkable and eminent in God and Good Men; becauſe a due Obſervance of this Particular will exceedingly contribute to the Succeſs of the Former. It will quicken our Concern for their beſt and moſt valuable Part; It will make our Care of their Souls more earneſt and vigorous, and it will prepare the way for its being better accepted too. For the firſt ſtep to Perſwaſion is, to poſſeſs Men with an Opinion that we heartily love them. And a Command is half obeyed, when once the Party is thoroughly convinced, that what we require, is not for the ſake of exerciſing a Deſpotick Power, or from a Delight to lay heavy Burdens; but from a Senſe of its being neceſſary to their Happineſs, and becauſe we zealouſly deſire their Good. Now, conſidering how much more this World affects the Generality

nerality of People, than that which is to come; the Parent, who does not firſt approve himſelf tender of his Children's Body, and its preſent Comforts and Conveniencies, will never be able to get himſelf believed, when profeſſing the kindeſt Reſentments, and moſt impatient Wiſhes, for the Safety and Happineſs of their Souls.

3. But to proceed. If the Trouble of theſe Parents was great for the Abſence of ſo dear a Child, their Joy muſt needs be doubled by meeting him again, not only ſafe, but engaged in an Employment ſo very promiſing, ſo very becoming, ſo much above his Years. For the *Forty-ſixth* Verſe ſays, *They found him in the Temple, ſitting in the midſt of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them Queſtions.* And this, 'tis probable, he might do, not merely out of Curioſity, but to acquit himſelf of a Duty, expected from all, who attained to a certain Age among the Jews. For They, who have taken pains in examining their Inſtitutions and Cuſtoms, obſerve this commendable one to have obtained among the reſt, That their Youth were brought before ſome Maſters of the Synagogue, to render an account of their proficiency in Religion, and from thenceforth to be anſwerable for their own Sins. That this was a Ceremony, performed with ſtrict Examination, with devout Prayers, and ſolemn Benedictions.

See Grot. in locum.

Buxtorf. Synag. Judaic. Cap. 3.

All which, as it very nearly reſembles, ſo may it ſeem to have miniſtred ſome ground to, the Chriſtian Rite of *Confirmation*. Wherein, after having anſwered to the firſt and moſt neceſſary Rudiments of Faith and Practice, our young People, in preſence of the Fathers of the Church, and with the Bleſſing of God by theſe implored upon their future Endeavours, do take the Charge of their Baptiſmal Vow upon themſelves;

ſelves; as being preſumed ſufficiently inſtructed, to be reſponſible for their own Duty, the remaining part of their Lives. A very Learned Man ſuppoſes our Lord to have ſtaid behind for this purpoſe. Which, though Others were not uſually called upon to do till Thirteen, yet He might do it at Twelve Years old: The particular Seaſon then in uſe being accommodated to the Capacities and Attainments of Children in general, but not forbidding thoſe of extraordinary Qualifications, from doing it earlier, when competently prepared, and of a Genius, which (to ſpeak in the Jews own Phraſe) did *run before the Command.*

4. However this be (for I am content to leave it as a probable Conjecture only) yet thus much is certain, That He, in thoſe Conferences, behaved himſelf, not only to the Satisfaction, but the Wonder of the whole Aſſembly; *For all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers.* Verſ. 47. In which, notwithſtanding, we are not to imagine all the fullneſs of his Divine Knowledge diſplayed, but ſuch a brightneſs of Parts and Apprehenſion, as ſpoke an uncommon Pregnancy, and left them ſtill free to ſuppoſe him no more than Man, though for his Age a wonderful one. So much the Diſpenſation undertaken by him required, in the whole courſe whereof nothing was permitted, that might juſtly call the Truth of his Humane Nature in queſtion. For this reaſon the Evangeliſt prudently adds, at the cloſe of the Chapter, that *he increaſed in Wiſdom as well as Stature.* Verſ. 52. Mind and Body both received additional Improvements, though ſome of thoſe Additions were imparted in larger Proportions than uſual. The Endowments of each exerted themſelves, in meaſures and actions ſuitable to the ſeveral Stages of his Life. And even the Divine Nature, though always preſent, ſeems to have communicated

municated its Powers to the Humane, by distinct and gradual Illuminations: declining industriously the publick Manifestation of it self to the World, till, according to the common Course of things, Ripeness of Years and Judgment had carried him up to the Perfections of a Man, and the Execution of his Ministry called for such Evidence to assist him. So little Reason have we to suppose, that He, who condescended to be like us in Body, should think it below him to be so too, in that other no less essential, but much more noble part of us, our Soul; without which it was impossible for him to be Man. So little, to conceive of the Divine Essence, as supplying the place and offices of our Intellectual Faculties. For all that is divine is infinite, and nothing Infinite can admit of Enlargement: He therefore that *increased in Wisdom*, must needs be Man, with regard to the Seat of Wisdom in Man, which is a finite reasoning Mind.

5. Once more. S. *Luke* thought it requisite to acquaint us, at the *Fifty-first* Verse, that *Jesus* accompanied his Parents back to *their own home*, that *he dwelt with them at Nazareth*, and *was subject to them*. How his time was spent in this Retreat, we can have no Certainty. Whether he wrought with *Joseph* at the Carpenter's Trade, as some of the Antients have delivered their Opinion, is not material to enquire. Thus much we are satisfied of, and that is enough for our purpose, that, whether his Life were a Life of Labour or not, it was a Life of Modesty and Meekness, and exemplary Obedience.

And what a Pattern hath this set our Children, of Humility, and Submission, and Reverence to their Parents? How indispensable does it represent their Duty, how inexcusable their Stubbornness and Contempt, when He, who was God as well as Man, thought it became him still to be govern'd, and in all his Deportment was full of Respect to Them, whose

Son,

Son, though he was in one capacity, yet was he their Father, their Lord, their King, their Creator, in another? Sure no Child, after this, ſhould dare to diſregard a Father or Mother, though their Perſons be never ſo deſpicable, or their Circumſtances never ſo deplorable. Sure none can ſuffer himſelf to deſpiſe them, for Infirmities of Body, Decays of Age, or Meanneſs of Condition. None, who conſiders our Saviour as His Example, can. For, What Defects of Nature, what Difference of Fortunes, can ſet any one ſo far beneath any other, as theſe Perſons were really below the bleſſed Jeſus? God and Man! The Diſtance is infinite, and leaves no place for Compariſons. How ſacred is the Obligation, which Blood and Nature have tied, when even the Name and Character alone is venerable, though the Relation be wanting? For Such our Lord hath proved it, by that Obſervance paid, not to Her only, of whoſe Subſtance he was made Fleſh; but likewiſe to Him, who was no otherwiſe his Father, than by Reputation and common acceptance: Entitled to this Honour, only as the Husband of *Mary*, and by a Miſtake of the World, who were not let in to the myſterious Secret of a Virgin made a Mother.

Moſt wiſely in the mean while did the Holy Ghoſt inſert this Paſſage into the Hiſtory of our meek Redeemer's Life, as a ſingular Ornament and Grace to it, an early but remarkable Inſtance of his marvellous Condeſcenſion, and ſuch a motive to profound Reverence and humble Duty, as for force and impreſſion might exceed ten thouſand laboured Arguments.

Conſider This, all You, whom the Pride or the Giddineſs of Youth, the Heat or the Perverſeneſs of your Spirits, the Sprightlineſs of your Wit, or the Succeſs of your Induſtry hath made refractory, or haughty; and conſider withal, how you will be able to ſtand before this Judge at the laſt Day. A Judge,

who

who himſelf learnt Obedience in the days of his Fleſh; who will require a ſevere account of that Duty, he thought it no leſſening of himſelf to pay; a Duty, which, by paying, he hath ſufficiently declared to be due and neceſſary, from every Child to every Parent, ſo far as, by the Laws of God and Man, they have a right to command it from them.

6. But it muſt be confeſs'd withal, that this Dominion, and the Deferences riſing upon it, though very large, are not without their Bounds, beyond which they muſt not, they cannot, in Juſtice and Reaſon, be allowed to extend. Some reſerved caſes 'tis plain there are, for which this very Saviour is alſo our Precedent. After his Stay behind at *Jeruſalem*, without the Leave, or ſo much as Knowledge of his Parents; after that kind Complaint from his Mother, *Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy Father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing:* He purges himſelf of that ſeeming Neglect, and thinks no farther Apology needful for all the Trouble and Perplexity, this Action had put them to, than that Intimation at the *49th Verſe*, That he had other Affairs upon his hands; That there was one infinitely ſuperiour, whoſe Orders were of the laſt importance, and they muſt not take it ill, if he made it his firſt Care to attend that Father, though with the Imputation of ſome Diſregard to Them: Mean while they found him where he ought to be, and doing what his Character and Poſt required. For thus much is included in that ſhort Sentence, and 'tis but reaſonable to ſuppoſe all this was meant, when he ſaid unto them, *How is it that ye ſought me? Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?* A Saying, which the next Verſe ſays *They underſtood not*, but the following Occurrences of his Life have abundantly explained it to us; and the Argument it contains, I have purpoſely reſerved for my *Laſt* Obſervation, with a Deſign to

cloſe

close this Discourse, with some useful Rules and practical Inferences from it.

The Summ of what I have to offer by way of Inference from hence, will all turn upon This, That, in the Duty of a Christian, there are Some things required, of a Subordinate and Occasional Obligation, and Others, of a Supreme, Perpetual, and Indispensable one. That every Man indeed stands bound, so far as it is possible for him, to make good the Expectations of those several Characters and Capacities, in which the Providence of God hath placed him. But still this must constantly be done, with an Eye to that Relation, which he bears to Almighty God. That this is of the highest Importance and strongest Engagement; and therefore, if it happen, as many times it may, and sometimes will, that these seem to clash, and become inconsistent with one another; In such Cases, a Man may, nay he must, nay he ought scarce so much as to deliberate, whether he should not, set aside every thing, that hinders the Discharge of Religion and a Good Conscience. These are to be first and uppermost in our Consideration and Care; and all besides dispense with themselves, and, in the nature and equity of the thing, give place to them. Which is but in other words to say, what the Apostles did to the Chief Priests at *Jerusalem*, that, where both cannot be obeyed together, there it is right and reasonable, that We should hearken, and study to recommend our selves *to God rather than Men.* Acts iv. 19. v. 29.

The Rules arising from this Inference would, if the Argument were taken in its utmost Latitude, extend to the Obedience due to the Civil Magistrate. But (in regard a fit Occasion will shortly offer, for treating of That expressly and at large) I shall at present make it my Endeavour, to be useful, by some *Epist. for the 4th Sunday after* Epiphany.

Directions reſtrained to Private Families. The Subject now before us is the Behaviour of a Son to a Natural Parent, The beſt and meekeſt Son, to the beſt and moſt excellent Mother. To this I ſhall therefore keep cloſe, by framing ſuch Advice, as concerns the Demeanour and mutual Regards proper for Parents and Children, and, in ſome proportion, of Maſters and Servants, toward each other. Advice, which all, I think, who diligently attend to it, muſt needs confeſs manifeſtly to reſult from this portion of Scripture, and That which hath already been ſpoken upon it.

1. And *Firſt* of all. If God ought to be pleaſed and ſerved in the firſt place, and the Diſcharge of our Duty to Him be the thing we are principally accountable for: Then are all Parents and Maſters hereby plainly condemned, who refuſe to allow the Perſons under their care, all neceſſary Means and reaſonable Leiſure, for the exerciſe of, and improvement in, the buſineſs of Religion. How much Leiſure is reaſonable, and what Means are neceſſary, it is not poſſible for Me, or any other Teacher, to determine in the general. Becauſe, after all that is or can be ſaid, the different Circumſtances of each Party concern'd will continue to be the true meaſure of them. But thus much I may ſay, with Confidence and great Safety, that, as God hath been wonderfully indulgent to Us, with reſpect to the Neceſſities of this Life in particular; as he hath made even the Works of our Lawful Calling, when purſued with Honeſt Induſtry, and a regular Concern, a Branch of the Chriſtian's Duty, and highly acceptable to Him: So We, in Gratitude, ſhould imitate this Goodneſs, ſpare him as much time as fairly we can, and be as liberal in the Returns of our Service, as ever the Caſe will bear. Thus much, to be ſure, we are abſolutely bound to, not to let even the moſt buſie Em-

ployment

ployment ſwallow up all our Thoughts and Pains: Not to involve our ſelves to ſuch a degree in the Affairs of the Preſent, as to forget that we have any, that we have our main, Intereſt to be ſecured in the Next, World.

And, as this is an Obligation incumbent upon every Man, for his own Particular, ſo is it no leſs for Theirs, of whoſe Behaviour and Education he hath the charge. The rather in truth, becauſe the Giddineſs and Inconſideration of Youth have need of a powerful reſtraint from without; and, to make the Fear and Service of God their choice, it is needful (ordinarily ſpeaking) that they be firſt fixed in them by the Authority of their Governours. And therefore it is by no means enough, that ſuch be permitted to employ ſome hours in holy Duties, when they are found inclining to it themſelves: but for the moſt part highly requiſite, that they be often called upon, ſpurr'd forward, and obliged to draw nigh to him, even when their own Diſpoſitions would not, if let alone, bring them thither. By theſe means they will be taken off from Idleneſs, weaned to the Pleaſures and Vanities of the World, acquire by degrees a habit of Thinking and Serioufneſs, be taught not only to *remember*, but to love, their *Creator in the days of their Youth*, delight in his Goodneſs, and eſteem his *Service*, as in reality it is, *perfect Freedom*. Theſe Methods I may venture to preſcribe, as uſually neceſſary; and moſt Parents and Maſters of Families feel occaſion, I doubt, more than enough for them. But where we have the happineſs to meet with early and forward Deſires to be holy and good, and our Children and Servants even go before our care in the way of Godlineſs; to check theſe is not only wicked, but perfectly barbarous. Here then it will be prudent to temper ſuch Zeal with Knowledge, to direct their Judgments, by ſhewing, how all the parts of Religion agree together, how

far God allows the Concerns of this mortal Life to intermingle with thoſe of Eternity, and, that he expects a Proviſion for our Bodies and Families ſhould come in for ſome ſhare of our time and pains: And, when they are brought to a right ſence of theſe matters, then to deny them competent opportunities for praying, and reading, and coming to Church, and preparing for the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the like, is a moſt ungodly betraying of our Truſt. And as oft as our own very urgent Buſineſs is not neglected upon theſe Accounts, the words of our Lord here ought to be accepted for a ſufficient Juſtification, *How is it that ye ſought me? Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's buſineſs?*

2. *Secondly.* I cannot but think it proper upon this occaſion to counſel Parents in the *Next* place, that they would be exceeding cautious in diſpoſing of their Children, as to the Profeſſions and Trades, that muſt ſettle them in the World. The Conſideration, that commonly determines Mens Choice in this particular, is, what Calling will be likely to prove moſt thriving and gainful. But, though ſuch Views may be allowed their due weight, when ſeconded by others, and not liable to any juſt Objection; yet ought they by no means to be inſiſted on, as the Only, no not as the Principal Conſiderations. For, have we forgotten ſo utterly what the Wiſeſt of Men obſerves, and what Experience never fails to confirm, that *Better is a little the Righteous hath, than great riches of the ungodly?* Better, as it is enjoyed with more comfort and content, without Clamour from abroad, without Reproaches from within; as it is likelier to engage the Bleſſing and Providence of God, to grow greater, to wear longer. But, all theſe Advantages apart, do we not call our ſelves Chriſtians? Wou'd we not by that Name be underſtood to believe a Future State and an Immortal Soul? Should

Prov. xvii. 1.

we

we not then, above all things elſe, be ſollicitous for the eternal Welfare of our Children? And can it become us to engage them, for term of life, in ſuch Practices, as, for a little Pomp and Plenty here, will render them for ever miſerable hereafter? When S. *Paul* orders Servants to *obey in the Lord*, he means, that they ſhould obſerve their Maſters, ſo far as Their Directions agree with Chriſt's. And when he exhorts the Brethren, all to *abide in* their *Calling with God*: He intends, that their Temporal Intereſts ſhould be reconcileable with, ſhould indeed be ſubſervient to, their future everlaſting one.

The Duty we owe our Neighbour, is, in our excellent Catechiſm ſaid, among many other things, to conſiſt in this, that *we learn and labour truly to get our own living, and to do our duty in that ſtate of life to which it ſhall pleaſe God to call us.* Our Living muſt be got, but got *truly*, that is, juſtly and honeſtly. We muſt anſwer the State of Life to which God calls us; but God calls no Man to a State and Trade of Sin. And therefore, when a Calling engages any Man in Acts of Sin, or in provoking other People to Sin; when it drives him upon methods of Falſhood and Deceit, of Lewdneſs, or any manner of diſſolute Converſation; when the Profits propounded from it are not to be attained, ſo long as Innocency and a clear Conſcience are preſerved; Thoſe Gains are the Wages of Iniquity, the Price of Heaven and our Souls; That Calling is certainly unlawful, and no Advantages, no not *all the Kingdoms of the World and the glory of them*, can render it fit for a prudent Man to chooſe. If, as the laſt Particular declared, the moſt commendable Profeſſions and Practices may not go away with the whole of us, but a great deal ought to be reſerved for the Uſes of God and a better Life; How unreaſonable, how unnatural, how barbarous a Wickedneſs muſt it needs be, to bind our Children out to the De-

vil, by putting them into ſuch ways of getting Wealth, as lead directly to Hell: and that they may *wear purple and fine linnen*, and *fare ſumptuouſly*, for a few days, expoſe them almoſt to the Certainty, the Likelihood at leaſt, of crying in vain for many Ages, for *a drop of water to cool their Tongues, when they ſhall be tormented in that flame?*

Farther yet. I cannot, in this caſe, think it ſufficient, that our Children be not trained up in a direct neceſſity of Sinning, but that, as much as in us lies, they be ſet at a diſtance from all probable occaſions and allurements to it: That we conſider the Infirmities of humane Nature, and the frequency and ſtrength of Temptations to do evil. Hence it will follow, that ſuch Profeſſions, as manifeſtly lay Men open to danger, where we have inſtances of many, if not moſt People miſcarrying, where good Principles are apt to be unſettled, and hopeful Beginners generally harden and turn profligate, that all ſuch, I ſay, are much too hazardous for them to be truſted with. A good and tender, a wiſe and religious Father will not venture a Child in Methods of Living, not only where he muſt, but where it is odds he may, and where very few do not, make Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience.

In ſhort, we ought to bear in mind continually, that *our Treaſure* is laid up *in Heaven*, that *our continuing City is not here, but we ſeek one to come:* that Virtue and Piety are the only Expedient for bringing us to, and ſettling us in, that bliſsful place: that conſequently every Man's grand affair is *ſo to paſs through things Temporal, that he finally loſe not the things Eternal.* All our Cares therefore, all our Proſpects, ſhould be govern'd by that one. All our Concerns ſo ordered, all the Fortunes and Poſts of our Children ſo laid out, that they may not neglect the more valuable Advantages of their Souls: but ſo contrive to manage the

buſineſs

buſineſs of the World, as at the ſame time faithfully to diſpatch the buſineſs of Their Father and Our Father, Their God and Our God.

One word now of Advice to Children, and Servants, and all that are in a ſtate of Subjection; and then I have done.

Now here I deſire all ſuch very ſoberly to conſider, from what hand Parents of every ſort derive their Authority, even from God above. Their Obedience then to theſe, in all lawful and honeſt Commands, is Obedience to God; It is an Act of Religion, and therefore to be performed, not only with Diligence and Fidelity, but alſo with Zeal and Chearfulneſs. They do their great Father's and Maſter's Buſineſs, and purchaſe to themſelves a ſure Reward in Heaven, while their Labours deſerve the Approbation of their Superiours upon Earth. So very merciful is God, in accepting Mens lawful Induſtry; So well pleaſed with their Care, in any buſineſs they are intruſted with, that he places it to account, as an Inſtance of their Faithfulneſs and Duty to himſelf.

'Tis true, if their Parents or Maſters impoſe any terms, which they ought not to comply with, they muſt obey God, whatever be the Conſequence. But yet even then, when they muſt diſobey or diſpleaſe their Governours, this is to be done upon plain and ſure Grounds, and always with Modeſty, and Meekneſs, and good Manners. The Reaſons of their Refuſal, their own juſt Vindication, their real Concern for all ſuch unhappy Occaſions, are to be repreſented in the ſofteſt, and humbleſt, and moſt reſpectful Expoſtulations, that can poſſibly be thought of. Their *Liberty* never to be uſed for *a Cloak of Maliciouſneſs* and Obſtinacy, but *as becomes the Servants of God.* And becauſe His Servants, therefore not in a condition to do any thing, which they know the Great and Common Maſter of all Man-

1 Pet. ii. 16.

kind diſallows. I ſay, which *they know* he diſallows; For, in order to preſerve their Innocence, they ſhould be very induſtrious to get their Judgments inform'd aright, that they may not be inſnared with frivolous and unneceſſary Scruples, pretend Points of Conſcience where there is no room for them, and decline that Obedience ignorantly, which they ought to pay, and to underſtand the Limits of it better. In order hereunto, they will do well moſt earneſtly to beg the Directions and Aſſiſtance of God's enlightning Spirit; For, though all have need enough, yet They who are young, and in Circumſtances of Subjection, unexperienced generally, unlearned too often, Theſe are more eſpecially concerned, to come to God in the Language of the Collect for this Day: begging that *they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and alſo may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the ſame, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty and everlaſting God, who doſt govern all things in Heaven and Earth: Mercifully hear the Supplications of thy People, and grant us thy Peace all the days of our life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

John xiv. 27.

The EPISTLE.

Rom. xii. 6.

PARAPHRASE.

6, 7, 8. The conſequence of that Union and mutual relation I mentioned between the Members of one Body, is plainly this, that every man ought

HAving then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us; Whether Prophecy, let us propheſye according to the proportion of Faith.

7. *Or Miniſtry, let us wait on our miniſtring; or he that teacheth, on teaching.*

8. *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth*

giveth, let him do it with ſimplicity; he that ruleth, with Diligence; he that ſheweth mercy, with cheerfulneſs.

to conſider the Abilities God hath given him, and the Poſt he hath called him to in the Church; And, without envying them that have more and are placed above him, or deſpiſing them that have leſs and are below him, make it his buſineſs, to diſcharge his own part, diligently and conſcientiouſly, and reſt contentedly in that.

9. *Let love be without diſſimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.*

9. Let your Love to every Fellow-member be, not in pretence and outward ſhew only; but hearty and ſincere. But let Virtue and Duty be the meaſure and ground of it. And do not only avoid, but hate and deteſt all Wickedneſs, and let no conſideration ever reconcile you to it: Do not only practiſe, but delight and perſevere in Goodneſs, and let nothing be able to draw you off from it.

10. *Be kindly affectioned one toward another in brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.*

10. Conſider your ſelves as Brethren, and let your tenderneſs and good offices be as becomes ſuch: pay all due regards to one another, which either Mens Virtues or Stations require; and let your Humility be ſeen in acknowledging the good qualities of your Brethren, and reſpecting them above your own.

11. *Not ſlothful in buſineſs, fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord.*

11. Let your diligence and zeal in your duty be ſuch, as becomes Men who are doing God ſervice, and (as times and circumſtances will allow) can never do too much for ſuch a Maſter.

12. *Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing inſtant in Prayer.*

12. When Afflictions or Perſecutions are upon you, let the hope of a reward keep you cheerful; endure what God ſends with contentedneſs and reſolution; and perſevere in your requeſts for his Grace and Mercy, though you ſhould not obtain what you ask, for ſome time.

13. *Diſtributing to the neceſſity of Saints; given to hoſpitality.*

13. Extend your Charity for the Relief of your Fellow-Chriſtians; and be very forward and eager in entertaining Strangers, particularly thoſe who are forced to flee their own home for Religion.

14. *Bleſs them that perſecute you, bleſs and curſe not.*

14. Pray for your Perſecutors, and let not their bittereſt Malice provoke you to any return of angry Imprecations.

15. *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with them that weep.*

15. Be ſo affectionately concerned for all Chriſtians, as both to have and ſhew a fellow-feeling and tender reſentment of all the good or evil that happens to them; eſpecially that of their Souls.

16. *Be*

16. Live in perfect Amity and Concord. And when it is in your power to do good, think no Perſon too mean to do it to; nor any honeſt Method beneath you to do it by.

16. *Be of the ſame mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condeſcend to Men of low eſtate.*

COMMENT.

THE laſt Day's Epiſtle declared to us the Cloſeneſs of that Union, which Chriſtians ought to look upon themſelves knit together by, when called ſo often *one Body in Chriſt, and every one Members one of another.* In the explaining whereof having ſpent part of my Diſcourſe, I cloſed with ſome of thoſe Obligations, which that Conſideration brings us under, and are contained in the beginning of the Chapter. The Scripture now in hand conſiſts of a great many, which, for Method's ſake, we may conveniently enough reduce to the following Heads. 1. * Contentedneſs in our Station. 2. ‖ Diligence in our proper Buſineſs. 3. Mutual Love † and Reſpect. 4. ⁂ A tender Concern for the proſperous and adverſe Fortunes of our Fellow-Chriſtians. 5. ‖‖ Unity in Matters of Religion; And 6. ‡† Conſtancy and Meekneſs under Perſecutions and Wrongs. Each of theſe ſhall be conſidered, as briefly as I can, remembring, that my Method, propounded before, does not undertake to treat of any Duties we meet with in this Chapter, according to their own due extent, but purely and ſo far forth, as they are Conſequences of that Union and mutual Relation intended by this Figure *of a Body.*

* Ver. 6, 7, 8.
‖ 6, 7, 8, 11.
† 9, 10, 16.
⁂ 13, 16.
‖‖ 15, 16.
‡† 12, 14.

1. I begin with Contentedneſs in our reſpective Stations. The Arguments for which are compriſed in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Verſes, and proſecuted more at large in the xii Chapter of the Firſt Epiſtle to the *Corin-*

Corinthians. By comparing theſe two Places, it ſeems very probable, that the Gifts more directly aimed at by the Apoſtle, are thoſe extraordinary Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt, vouchſafed to Chriſtians in the Infancy of the Church, as at that time neceſſary Evidences of the Truth, and fitted for the more ſucceſsful Propagation of the Goſpel. Yet are not thoſe Arguments, either in the Apoſtle's Deſign, or in the Nature of the thing, ſo confined to the Extraordinary, as not with great force and clearneſs of Reaſon, to extend to all Ages and Conditions of Chriſtianity, when left to the ordinary Methods of Grace, by which it now ſubſiſts.

For, *Firſt*, we are put in mind (as was obſerved before under the head of Humility) that all theſe Endowments, by which any one Man excels any other Man, are Gifts. Inſtances of Favour, which none of Them who enjoy could lay any manner of Claim to; or, by any Induſtry of their own, acquire to themſelves. Conſequently, the meaneſt in common eſteem are the effect of Bounty; and agree in this, that they come all from the ſame hand, and are ſo many ſtreams of Grace, iſſuing from one common Source of undeſerved and overflowing Mercy. The thing they receive is in Subſtance the ſame; For, though *there be diverſities of gifts*, yet *the ſame ſpirit* is given in all. And, though there be *diverſities of Operations*, yet is it *the ſame God which worketh all in all*. A God, who is tied to no Proportions, who need not give at all except he pleaſe, and therefore works freely, both in the act, and in the meaſure, of his Diſtributions. For *all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will*. And the plain Inference from hence is, that, where every Man hath more than his due, there none can have a right to murmur or complain:

1 Cor. xii. 4.

Verſ. 6.

Verſ. 11.

plain: And, where all have the Honour of receiving from God, none can in reaſon think himſelf diſgraced, upon the account of any Inequality in the degree of what he ſo receives: ſince all partake in that one beſt Gift, and are conſidered by that one beſt Giver.

2. But, *Secondly*, Such Inequality is not only not unjuſt, but it is likewiſe prudent, and proceeds upon equitable Conſiderations. For *every man* (ſays this Apoſtle elſewhere) *hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.* An Obſervation, made indeed upon an Occaſion ſomewhat different from the Subject we are now upon, but intimating however this general Truth, that That is a Man's *proper gift*, which he is qualified to uſe and to improve. And therefore, when it ſhall be remembered, that This is the *Gift of God*; One, whoſe Wiſdom adjuſts all things with the greateſt exactneſs; one, whoſe Providence diſpoſes every Man's Fortune and Poſt in the World, as well as diſpenſes their ſeveral Abilities; one, who eſpecially conſults the Beauty and Convenience of the whole, and is not directed by ſuch narrow and partial Views, as Ignorance or Intereſt are apt to ſway us by; it ſeems but reaſonable to believe, that every Man is placed in ſuch a Sphere, as, all things conſidered, it is beſt for that Man at that time to be in. And that He, who made him, and poſted him there, did ſo, becauſe he beſt knew what he was cut out for; that, if the fault be not his own, he may be ſerviceable in this Station; and if he be not, 'tis highly probable he would prove leſs ſo, in any other. All which St. *Paul*, without any overſtraining this Alluſion, ſeems to inſinuate, not only in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Verſes now in hand, but alſo in his Diſcourſe to the *Corinthians*; when comparing the different Orders and Offices in this Myſtical, to the different

1 Cor. vii. 7.

Members

Members and their reſpective Functions, in the Natural Body. So that, as the Formation of theſe Laſt is adapted to the Uſes Nature deſigned them for; the Qualifications of the Former are likewiſe, in proportion, ſuited to the Condition God hath ſet them in. And this is certainly a very powerful Motive to Contentedneſs, that, whatever place we hold in the Body of Chriſt, He who ſet us there knew very well why he did ſo: that, however we may think our ſelves capable of filling a higher, better than thoſe already in it; yet, if the Experiments were made, 'tis probable it would be made to loſs. So much the more probable, as we are more diſpoſed to think loftily of our ſelves, and meanly of thoſe above us; as we are forward in uſurping, or bitter in detracting from, and envying the Honours of Their Poſt; and diſſatisfied with, and given to diſdain, and be aſhamed of, the Meanneſs of our own.

3. Farther yet. This Inequality of Gifts and Stations is not only juſt, becauſe free; not only prudent, becauſe accommodated to the Parties concerned; but it is alſo abſolutely neceſſary. The Beauty of the Body cannot be diſplayed, the Exigencies of the Body cannot be ſupplied, nay the very Being of the Body cannot be preſerved, without it. All theſe require Variety: The Beauty, as conſiſting in Symmetry of Parts; The Exigencies, as ſerved by ſeveral Offices, to be performed by Inſtruments differently diſpoſed; The Being, as including in the very Idea of a Body Order and Diſtinction, and, without theſe, no longer a Compoſition, fitted for Life, and Motion, and Senſe, but a rude Maſs of uſeleſs undigeſted Matter, a Lump of Inactivity and Confuſion. So ſays the Apoſtle of the Body Natural, *The Body is not one Member, but many. If the Foot ſhall ſay, becauſe I am not the Hand, I am not of the Body, is it therefore not of the Body? And* 1 Cor. xii. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

if

if the Ear ſhall ſay, becauſe I am not the Eye, I am not of the Body, is it therefore not of the Body? If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the Hearing? If the whole were Hearing, where were the Smelling? But now hath God ſet the Members, every one in the Body, as it hath pleaſed him. And if they were all one Member, where were the Body? But now are they many Members, yet but one Body. The Application of all which Similitude himſelf hath made in the latter end of that Chapter:

Verſ. 27, 28, 29. *Now ye are the Body of Chriſt, and Members in particular. And God hath ſet ſome in the Church, firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then Gifts of Healings, Helps, Governments, Diverſities of Tongues. Are all Apoſtles? Are all Prophets? Are all Teachers?* and ſo on. To the ſame purpoſe, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*,

Eph. iv. 11, 12. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt.* The Sum whereof is, That the Neceſſities of Mankind thus united are of ſeveral kinds; that theſe cannot be ſerved without a proportionable number of Organs, formed and placed differently; that the difference of that Form and Place depends upon the Uſes aſſigned to each; that all the Parts, thus formed and placed, make up one regular Fabrick; that every one of theſe is uſeful and neceſſary in its proper Poſition, the leaſt and loweſt can no more be ſpared than the nobleſt and higheſt; that the exalting of one above its due ſituation and proportion, would produce a defect and deformity, no leſs than the debaſing or diminiſhing of another: That every one is therefore of equal value, conſidered as a Member, and all compounding the ſame Body. Conſequently, that this difference of Gifts and Stations ought to breed no Diſcontent, but quite the contrary: Becauſe,

without

without this difference of Parts, there could not be the Union of a Body: and without ſuch Union there could not be that mutual Relation, that reciprocal Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs, that equal Value and Regard, which now there is, from every one to every other Chriſtian, conſidered as a part of and Fellow-member with himſelf, ſeparated from whom, it is impoſſible for the Body to ſubſiſt in that Capacity.

What then is the Reſult of all this, but that, ſince all cannot have the ſame Place, nor execute the ſame Office in the Church and the World, each ſhould reſt ſatisfied with the Diſpoſal of his wiſe Head, and cheerfully take up with that uſe he is framed for? That the Eye ſhould be content with Seeing, and the Ear with Hearing; The Hand with Working, and the Foot with Walking; The Unlearned with receiving Inſtruction, and the Learned with the Labour of giving it; The Inferiours with Obedience, and the Poor with Induſtry; The Lawyer with the Bar, the Divine with his Miniſtry, the Tradeſman with his Shop, and the Husbandman with his Tillage. For, when theſe go out of their own way, and invade the Buſineſs proper to each other, the Union of the Body is broken, and nothing but Diſorder and Miſchief can poſſibly come of it. This pragmatical and envious Spirit, this Ambition and Emulation, is, in truth, the cauſe of all that Confuſion, which either the Church, or the State, is at any time endanger'd by: and therefore S. *Paul* hath wiſely joined thoſe two Exhortations together, that *ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs.* This is what he preſſes here, that we would conſider our own Gifts, and the Character we are appointed to, that we would keep to, and contain our ſelves within, the bounds theſe have ſet us. That we would not take upon us to be wiſer than he that made us, and poſted us in this rank; but, as we are elſewhere dire- 1 Theſſ. v. 12.

1 Cor. vii. 17. ɛted, *As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and therein abide with God.* By which *abiding* only let me add, that it is not the Apostle's Intent there, neither is it mine here, by pressing the Duty of Contentedness, to represent all Change of a Man's Post unlawful: For this, in some cases, is advisable and useful, in others absolutely necessary. And therefore, when the Providence of God calls us away to another Station, Obedience to that Call is no argument of our former Discontent. And this the Providence of God may be fairly supposed to do, as oft as Necessity forces, or Authority commands, or manifest Advantage to the Publick perswades, or many lawful and weighty Circumstances, fit to balance a discreet and conscientious Man, concur to represent such an Alteration, not only lawful, but highly to be chosen and commended. But, where Levity and Littleness of Spirit, Ambition or Greediness of Gain, Envy at others, or Uneasiness with ones own private Condition, are at the bottom of such a Change, and the true Motives inducing it; there, to be sure, the Man is blameable, and the Duty of his Membership violated and forgotten. For, where all cannot have a place high and honourable, eminent and publick, none should scorn those of a lower and laborious degree, but do his business gladly there, while in it, as well as gladly embrace Ease and Promotion, when opportunities offer for them. S. *Paul* hath left us clear enough in this case, *Art*

1 Cor. vii. 21. *thou called being a Servant? care not for it:* *i. e.* Let not that trouble thee, perform thy part honestly and contentedly. *But if thou may'st be made free, use it rather.* Yet still use it with this temper and remembrance, that though Liberty be a more commodious, yet Service was as truly Christian a State; and in truth thou shalt be esteemed and rewarded, according to thy care of that Trust and Function, in which

thy

thy preſent Situation in the Body hath engaged thee. And this leads me to the

2. *Second* Duty inſtanced in, Diligence in our particular Place and Calling. This is what the Apoſtle would have us underſtand by *walking in*, by *being faithful to*; and in the Scripture now before us, by waiting on, our reſpective Offices, by *not being ſlothful in buſineſs*, but *fervent in ſpirit*, *ſerving the Lord*. This is the Inference drawn from every Man's having received ſome proper Gift; For, as he argues elſewhere, *the manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*. This is the Deſign of our Bleſſed Saviour, in his Parable of the Talents, where the reward of each Servant is proportioned to his Improvements, and He, who hid his Talent in a Napkin, is condemned to utter Darkneſs, for being *ſlothful* and *unprofitable*. This is the plain Conſequence of our Fellow-memberſhip in one Body, by referring us to Nature, which, in ſo vaſt a variety of Parts, hath not formed any One merely for ſhew, but All for uſe: And all too, for ſuch uſes, as do contribute, not only to their own ſingle Benefit, conſidered abſtractedly, and either in oppoſition to, or apart from the reſt; but, ſome way or other, to the Common Good of the Whole. So that whatever fails in this point, is not a part, but an Excreſcence, and a Burden, a Wen that loads, or a Canker that gnaws and eats it away. The Effect of which is not Beauty, or Health, or Strength, but a Deformity and a Nuiſance, a Weakneſs and Diſeaſe.

1 Cor. vii. 17. iv. 2. Rom. xii. 7, 11. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Matth. xxv.

Thus alſo the *Body of Chriſt*, he tells us, is *increaſed and edified, by that which every joint ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part*. So that no Man performs the Duty of a Chriſtian, who ſits with his Arms a-croſs,

Epheſ. iv. 16.

and hath nothing to ſhew, for the Time and the Abilities afforded him. The difference of Degrees and Fortunes in the World do indeed allow, nay they require, different ſorts of Employment: But no Man's Life, in any the moſt exalted or plentiful Condition, was ever intended to be idle, and wholly unemployed. To eat, and drink, and ſleep, and purely to amuſe and recreate our ſelves, are Refreſhments, deſigned to recruit our Spirits, and fit us for new Buſineſs, but are not themſelves, nor can they be, the proper Buſineſs of any Man living. And, as in our natural Compoſition, there never is or can be one moments entire Reſt, ſo in our Spiritual or Politick one, the lying ſtill of any Member is at once a Miſchief to it ſelf, and to all about it. And therefore, whatever is or may be reaſonably expected from us, whatever are the Duties, which our Education, and Endowments, and manner of Life, have fitted us for, or confined us to; The induſtrious diſcharge of Theſe is a Service done to God, an Obedience due to our Common Head, a Care owing to our Selves, and to thoſe that have immediate Dependence upon us, an Inſtance not meerly of Charity, but even of ſtrict Juſtice to our Brethren; Who, being One with us, have a right to demand, and are defrauded and really injured, when they do not actually reap, ſome Advantage from us.

Theſe Reflections may ſuffice, I hope, to make us ſenſible, both that we ought to be employed, and after what manner it becomes us to be ſo. To ſay, we muſt not live like Drones, upon Spoil and Prey, and ſucking out the fruit of other Men's Sweat and Strength, is to ſay no more than this Apoſtle did, when directing the *Theſſalonians*, that *if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat.* And

2 Theſſ. iii.

I cannot forbear remarking by the by, that S. *Paul*, when calling ſuch, *diſorderly walkers, and buſie-bodies*, points at qualities, that are certain Companions of Idleneſs.

Idleneſs. For the Mind cannot be abſolutely out of Employment. Vice and diſſolute Principles tread cloſe upon the heels of Sloth: And, as from not doing good we quickly ſlide into doing ill; So from not having ſome buſineſs of our own to entertain us, we naturally fall into that which no way concerns us; To prying, and meddling, and tattling, and cenſuring, and ſlandering, and miſchief-making. So certain is it, that, even in our Perſonal Capacity, Buſineſs is a good Refuge, and ſaves us out of harms way: So evident, that in our Publick, it is unavoidably neceſſary, becauſe there is no middle State between helping Society and hurting it. And the phlegmatick ſluggiſh parts, which add nothing to the Beauty and Strength, are no better than the Excrement and Filth firſt, and then the Sores and Scabs of this Body.

To ſay, that no Man ought to ſuſtain himſelf by vicious Practices, by Lewdneſs, or Fraud, or Oppreſſion, or Diſcord, or any thing that is of ill Fame, or pernicious Conſequence, is no more than Civil Communities generally agree in. And ſome States have had the Wiſdom to provide againſt theſe, by calling all Perſons, liable to ſuſpicion, ſtrictly to account for the Methods, by which They and their Families were ſupported.

But the Laws of the Chriſtian Society ſay a great deal more. They forbid us to do ill, They forbid us to do nothing, They forbid us to be buſie about that which in effect is nothing; To ſquander away our time in Impertinencies, To take pains, that are not like to turn to any account. They enjoin us to make a juſt Eſtimate of our Gifts; to remember the Author, the Dignity, the End of them, and not to trifle away Means and Opportunities, fitted for producing the nobleſt Effects: To behave our ſelves worthy our Character, as becomes Reaſonable Creatures, and enlightned Chriſtians: Characters utterly

defaced, in thoſe that make any ſort of Wickedneſs their buſineſs; Greatly diſparaged, by Them, who ſtoop ſo low, as to lay themſelves out upon mean and little Deſigns: Never anſwered, except by ſuch Callings, and ſuch Induſtry about them, as may tend to our own Benefit and Salvation: Nor then neither, except our Management and the Matters in which it is employed, do in ſuch manner conſult our Own, as, at the ſame time, and together with it, to advance the Publick Good.

Thus much is apparently included in this Alluſion of a Body; Whoſe every Limb and Veſſel, though ready to diſcharge the Office peculiar to it, yet not one of them does it with any ſeparate view of Delight or Intereſt of its own. The Eye does not ſee, nor the Ear hear, nor the Stomach receive and digeſt Food, nor the Hands act, nor the Feet travel, for themſelves; But Each conſents to miniſter to the Other's occaſions, and all together conſpire to preſerve and promote the Welfare and Comfort of the Whole. And this, I think, ſufficiently intimates, not only what unwearied diligence is required in filling our own Poſt, and performing our own Part; But, that no Man is at liberty to chooſe ſuch a Poſt or Part, for the employment of his Life, from whence it is likely any Evil may, from whence it is not probable indeed that a great deal of Good will, come: And, that no private Profit of our own is ſingly a lawful Inducement for ſuch a Choice. But, to juſtifie us in this matter, it is neceſſary, that the Methods we live by be blameleſs, and fair, and honeſt. Such as we need never be aſhamed to own, and diſtinguiſh our ſelves by; Such as, in the natural courſe and tendency of things, may contribute to the increaſe of our own Virtue, the Glory of God, and the Advantage of our Brethren. For *he that in theſe things ſerveth Chriſt*, He only *is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.*

3. The *Third* Particular taken notice of, as recommended here, and grounded upon the Similitude of a Body, is *Mutual Love* and *Reſpect*. *Let Love be without diſſimulation. Be kindly affectioned one toward another in brotherly love.* And again; *In honour preferring one another*; *Be of the ſame mind one towards another*; *Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate.* Verſ. 9, 10. Verſ. 16.

In the former of Theſe, our Love, the Apoſtle requires *Two* Qualifications, The Sincerity, and the Fervency of it. Both plainly reſulting from the Conſideration of our Neighbours making up one Whole, and being integral parts with our ſelves. Every Man naturally bearing ſuch a regard to every part of his own Body, as admits no Hypocriſie, or falſe appearance of the Affection he really hath not. And this diſtinguiſhes true Chriſtian Charity, from all thoſe formal Pretences, and affected Civilities, from all thoſe Intereſted and deſigning, thoſe counterfeit and treacherous Profeſſions of Kindneſs, which the Friendſhips of this World ſo generally conſiſt of, when in truth there is little or nothing but Self at the bottom all the while. It is not therefore in this caſe enough, that we ſerve and do acts of Friendſhip to others, unleſs we do them for their ſakes that receive them. Nay, it is not enough, that we love them with a common and general ſort of affection, though this be undiſſembled; unleſs this be done with that warmth and fervour, which Nature inſpires for thoſe Relations, that are very near and dear to us. For ſuch is every Chriſtian, a Child of the ſame Father, a Member of the ſame Body.

The Latter, that of Reſpect, is oppoſite to the contemptuous Coldneſs, and diſdainful Treatment, which the Opinion of our own Advantages, and the Defects of our Brethren, are ſo frequently the Cauſe

of, towards the Perſons, who, upon theſe accounts, ſeem ſo far our Inferiours, as not to be worthy our Regard. And this the Apoſtle, much to the ſame effect indeed as here, but in Terms more expreſſive of the Compariſon I am now upon, hath urged in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*; *The Eye cannot ſay to the Hand I have no need of Thee, nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of You. Nay, much more thoſe Members of the Body which ſeem to be feeble are neceſſary. And thoſe Members of the Body, which we think to be leſs honourable, upon theſe we beſtow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comelineſs. For our comely parts have no need, but God hath tempered the Body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there ſhould be no Schiſm in the Body, but that the Members ſhould have the ſame care one for another.*

1 Cor. xii. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25.

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This Care of God and Nature, to ſet every part above our Scorn, is here propounded, as a Pattern to model our Behaviour upon, and a reaſon ſufficient, why no Man ſhould be deſpiſed. The Short of it is, That, what thoſe we think moſt deſpicable want in One way, is made up to them in Another; and, where the Gracefulneſs falls ſhort, there the Convenience and Uſefulneſs excels. Thus the moſt neceſſary Operations of Life are performed, partly by Veſſels hid from common view, partly by ſuch, as when ſeen, make no beautiful figure, partly by ſome, which general Cuſtom and natural Modeſty labour to conceal. Juſt thus the meaneſt of Mankind are of moſt general, moſt indiſpenſable Uſe. The Leiſure of the Learned, the Luxury of the Rich, the glittering Pomps of the Great, What would become of them all, if the Illiterate, the Poor, the loweſt in degree and common account, ſhould ſtop their Hands? If the Plough, and the Mill, and the Wheel, and the

Manufacture ſtood ſtill; If the laborious Pains of them, who ſeem cut out for nothing above that conſtant Drudgery, ſhould ceaſe, nay ſhould but intermit for a very ſmall Seaſon? Is not that Pride then moſt unreaſonable, that vilifies and tramples upon thoſe Faces, to the Sweat of which its Support, its very Subſiſtence is owing? that miniſter to our Plenty, and put the very Bread into our Mouths? 'Tis moſt extravagant upon a Civil Conſideration; 'Tis much more ſo upon a Religious and Spiritual one. For, in this regard too, we have reaſon to think it a mercy, that the Poor we have always with us. That Their Wants make room for Our Charity, and provide *us bags that wax not old, a treaſure in Heaven that faileth not*, a ſafe Repoſitory, *where no Thief approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth.* That their mean Birth and Figure in the World gives occaſion to that Humility, which hath the promiſe of a higher Elevation, and conforms us to the Image of our Head, who for our much more deſpicable ſakes, humbled and even *emptied himſelf.* But, which is more, This ſeemingly Vile Wretch is one Body with thy ſelf, as nearly related to Chriſt, as cloſely compacted into Him; and, if in that loweſt capacity he executes his Office, he may one day be the Object of thy Envy, whom now neglecting Thine, thou thinkeſt ſo far beneath thy Value, as not to hold him worth thy Pity.

Luke xii. 33.

Phil. ii. 8.

This is directly the Caſe, as repreſented by S. *Paul:* Let us next ſee the Behaviour of the Body Natural, that from thence we may learn, what at leaſt ſhould be the Reſentments and Behaviour of the Body Myſtical. Now he obſerves, that here we are ſollicitous to provide what additional Ornaments we can, and to make amends for the Defects of Nature by the Supplies of Art. A Care, that Nature ſeems to have inſpired, as a Token of Gratitude for the Service thoſe Parts do

us; and a neceſſary decency, in covering and defending what ought not to be expoſed, and yet can leaſt be diſpenſed with; And all agree in eſteeming the neglect of this Decency and Care, a Symptom of a profligate and abandon'd Mind. Ought We then, in the Body of Chriſt, that Head which aſſigns our reſpective Stations and Fortunes; Ought we not to treat thoſe, whom a few Circumſtantials have placed a little, but a little, below us, with all poſſible Humanity and Reſpect? Can it become us to inſult their Infirmities of Mind or Body, to make their Meanneſs of Birth, or Parts, or Profeſſion, matter of Jeſt and barbarous Triumph? No, we ſhould learn, from that Care, that Coſt, that Pain we are ſo often content with, to hide any bodily Deformity; how much we ſhould make it our buſineſs to cheriſh, to aſſiſt their Weakneſs, to ſhield many of their Follies and Faults from Shame and Reproach. We ſhould eſteem the Aſſiſtances given to them a Debt, and our ſelves obliged, by all manner of courteous Deportment and kind Condeſcenſions, to repair and ſupply thoſe Comforts and Honours they want; and which, did They not want, We could not enjoy. Thus we ſhould balance one Convenience with another, and labour ſo far to bring all to a level, that not any Chriſtian may have reaſon to think himſelf neglected or deſpiſed; but all be treated, as becomes Men, who are all needful and helpful, all too needing help; all ſerviceable, though not in the ſame kind, and all ſenſible that they are and ought to be ſo. This, rightly weighed, would produce that *Honour*, that civil *Preference*, that *one Mind*, that *ſame Care*, preſſed by the Apoſtle. For, where our Occaſions and our Supplies, our Uſes and Defects are reciprocal, though all ground of Diſtinction be not, yet any miſchief that can come from a too rigorous inſiſting upon it is, taken away. And one would think no

Man

Man need be adviſed, to live friendly, and comfortably, and reſpectfully, with thoſe, without whom he cannot live at all.

4. The *Fourth* thing here enjoined is our Tender Concern for the proſperous and adverſe Fortunes of our Fellow-Chriſtians. *Rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with them that weep*, Ver. 15. And this we likewiſe find urged from the ſame Topick all along inſiſted on; *Whether one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it, or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it.* 1 Cor. xii. 26. And again, *Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them which ſuffer Adverſity, as being your ſelves alſo in the Body.* Heb. xiii. 3. Recollect a little, how impoſſible it is, for any part of us to endure Pain, or Sickneſs, or Hunger, or Cold alone. How quick the Communication, how ſharp the Anguiſh, how general the Diſorder, how great the Anxiety, how diligent the Care to aſſwage or to relieve any Indiſpoſition, or Smart, of the leaſt and moſt diſtant Member? And again, Upon any Return of Health and Eaſe, how ſudden, how ſenſible, how mighty the Joy? Upon any acceſſion of Beauty, or Ornament, how gay the Spirits, how cheerful the Countenance, how pleaſing the innocent Pride of it? And let theſe inſtruct us, what Right, what Obligations we have, to take part in the good or ill Events of our Brethren, to think no Man's Joys or Griefs entirely his own; But to ſuſpect our ſelves, whether we be really alive in that Body, when ſuch a narrow Selfiſhneſs hath hardned us, as ſhuts out all tender Impreſſions, when cold, benummed, and quite forſaken of that reciprocal ſenſe, which the different Fortunes of our Fellow-members ought to create. Let theſe convince us too, that ſuch Concern muſt not content it ſelf with private and inward Reſentments only, but be expreſs'd, by active and vigorous, ready and continual Aſſiſtances.

That,

That, as One part of the Body ſubmits to be wounded or bliſtered, or ſcarified, or to Naufeatings, or Gripings, to diſcharge the Humours ſettled in Another, and ſet the Whole at eaſe; So ſhould we be far from grudging any ſupportable degree of expence or trouble, for the Benefit of the Diſtreſſed and Injured, eſteeming every Member's Sufferings a Calamity to the Body in common. Conſequently, That we do not *weep* with the Afflicted as we ought, except we dry up their Tears, by labouring to redreſs thoſe Afflictions, from whence they flow. That we do not *rejoyce* with the Proſperous as we ought, without ceaſing to envy, and deſiring to add, to their Happineſs. Our Diligence in both kinds muſt go to the very utmoſt of our Powers; They, who have Opportunities, muſt *diſtribute to the Neceſſities of Saints, and be given to Hoſpitality.* Nay, they muſt even court and hunt after ſuch Opportunities, ſeek them with an eager Zeal, and think themſelves to have obtained a Prize worth all their pains, when they have the good fortune to find them. They, who cannot do thus, muſt at leaſt wiſh they could, and never want the Diſpoſition, when they have not the Ability. And, ſince our Prayers are confined within no bounds, Theſe muſt ſtretch themſelves all the World over. For, in regard Chriſt hath diſperſed his Church over the face of the whole Earth, the diſtance of Place makes no difference in the degree of Relation; They are ſtill Members, and the ſame Body with ourſelves; and we muſt love, and be touch'd with a ſenſible Regard, muſt intercede with, and give Thanks to our Common Head, for them.

Verſ. 13. Τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.

5. *Fifthly.* In regard this Union is Divine and Spiritual, inſtituted to promote the Glory of God, and the Benefit of Souls; it ſhould be our earneſt and conſtant Study to promote, and come up as near as may be,

be, to a perfect Unity in Religion. Now the only way, 'tis plain, for uniting Souls, is by an Agreement and Conſent of their ſeveral Faculties. Thus Men are united in their Underſtandings, when they believe, and acknowledge the ſame Holy Truths, and abide by the ſame Principles. In their Wills and Affections; when they purſue the ſame Ends, expreſs the ſame Deſires, and bear the ſame Love to that which is good, and to one another. Which, added to the former, makes up what the Apoſtle calls, *Keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* From theſe Two ſhould follow an uniform Behaviour and Conſent of Action, termed by the ſame Apoſtle, *Walking by the ſame rule, and minding the ſame thing.* When we jointly advance the ſame common Intereſts, When, as becomes a Body animated by one Spirit, we all attend without diſtraction to the Furtherance of Piety and Peace, to the Salvation of Souls, to the adorning our Profeſſion, by undiſſembled Goodneſs, and a wiſe well-govern'd Zeal; When we, with *one Mouth*, as well as *one Mind*, *glorifie God*, and like Strings, tuned to the ſame Sound, make that Worſhip harmonious and uniform, which is eſtabliſhed to expreſs this Union, and is ſo admirably contrived for Edification and Decency. Well were it, if theſe Engagements were duly laid to heart, by thoſe buſie Factors for the Devil, who employ their Wits and Pens, in poyſoning the eaſie and unſtable, with profane, lewd, or heretical Principles; Well, if They would remember them too, who for Intereſt, or Prejudice, or Peeviſhneſs, break the Order, and depart from the Communion, of a ſettled Church, to whoſe Doctrine they offer none, and to whoſe Diſcipline they are able to bring, ſo very few, ſo very poor, Exceptions. But whether theſe Men will hear, or whether they will forbear, ſtill it

Eph. iv. 3.

Phil. iii. 16.

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is Our part, by all manner of regular means, to teſtifie our Reverence for Chriſt, our Obedience to our lawful Paſtors, our cheerful and unanimous Conformity to their wholſome Laws, and our Love to the Brethren and Fellow-members. Labouring continually and earneſtly, to obtain that moſt valuable Bleſſing which we are taught to pray for in our excellent dayly Prayers, *The good eſtate*, I mean, *of the Catholick Church*; *That it may be ſo guided and governed by our Lord's good Spirit, that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life.*

There yet remains a *Sixth* Duty behind, That of Conſtancy and Meekneſs under Perſecutions and Wrongs, enjoined at the *Twelfth* and *Fourteenth* Verſes; But, by reaſon of my former Enlargements upon the Reſt, and the Affinity of this to ſome others, which will call for our Conſideration the next Lord's-day: I chooſe to reſerve it till that time.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

John ii. 1.

1. Three days after Jeſus came into thoſe parts, (*ſee Chap.* i. 43.) there was a Feaſt for a Marriage, probably of ſome of his Mother's Relations, where ſhe was preſent.

1. *AND the third day there was a Marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jeſus was there.*

2. They therefore invited Him and thoſe Diſciples who attended him.

2. *And both Jeſus was called, and his Diſciples, to the Marriage.*

3. Upon their Proviſion of Wine falling ſhort, his Mother deſired him to ſupply them.

3. *And when they wanted wine, the Mother of Jeſus ſaith unto him, They have no wine.*

4. Jeſus replied, That this was not a

4. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come.*

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matter proper for her Authority to interpoſe in, and, that Miracles were not to be wrought for gratifying the Requeſts of Friends, but had their proper ſeaſons, of which he was the beſt Judge.

5. *His Mother ſaith unto the Servants, Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do it.*

His Mother, who ſeems not to have taken this for an abſolute Denial, but as an Intimation rather, that he would reſerve himſelf till it was proper, bad thoſe that attended, be ſure to obſerve any Orders he ſhould give them.

6. *And there were ſet there ſix Water-pots of Stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three Firkins apiece.*

6. Now there ſtood ſix large Veſſels, the uſe whereof was to hold Water, that might be always at hand to ſerve for the ſeveral ſorts of Waſhings, which the Law obliged the Jews frequently to repeat.

7. *Jeſus ſaith unto them, Fill the Water-pots with Water, and they filled them up to the brim.*

8. *And he ſaith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the Governour of the Feaſt. And they bare it.*

9. *When the Ruler of the Feaſt had taſted the Water that was made Wine, and knew not whence it was, but the Servants which drew the Water knew; the Governour of the Feaſt called the Bridegroom,*

10. *And ſaith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worſe; but thou haſt kept the good wine until now.*

10. It is uſual, when Mens Palats are freſh, and beſt able to diſtinguiſh, to give them the beſt they have; but thou haſt, contrary to common cuſtom at Entertainments, reſerved the moſt generous Wine to the laſt. Hereupon (as the ninth Verſe intimates) the Servants were examined about the matter, and gave an account how they came by it.

11. *This beginning of Miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee, and manifeſted forth his glory, and his Diſciples believed on him.*

11. This was the firſt Inſtance Jeſus gave of his Divine Power, which had its intended Effect, by confirming the Faith of thoſe Diſciples, whom the firſt Chapter relates to have lately come to him.

COMMENT.

THE Miracle here related being the Firſt, that offers, as well in the Hiſtory of our Bleſſed Saviour's Life, as in the Courſe of this Work; I conceive it may be of ſome uſe, to premiſe ſomewhat concerning Miracles

Miracles in general, which I ſhall do in the plaineſt and moſt inſtructive manner that I can.

1. Now the *Firſt* thing I obſerve on this occaſion, is, That, upon all extraordinary and new Diſcoveries of God's Will to Mankind, recorded in Scripture, it appears to have been his conſtant Uſage, to ſtrengthen their Authority, by a Power of working Miracles, imparted to the Perſons, whom he thought fit to employ as Inſtruments, for publiſhing thoſe Diſcoveries to the World. In proof of this there is no need to labour. The whole Hiſtorical part of the Old and New Teſtament bearing ſuch clear and ample Teſtimony to it. For, from the very firſt Call of *Abraham* out of a Country over-run with Idolatry and blind Superſtition, down to the lateſt Memorials of St. *Paul* and the other Apoſtles, the Narrative of two thouſand years Tranſactions abounds with Inſtances of this kind, ſo very numerous, that it were an Undertaking almoſt as endleſs, as it is ſuperfluous, but barely to repeat them. Let it ſuffice then to remark, upon this occaſion, that the End ſuch wondrous Operations were deſigned to ſerve, is not merely the Manifeſtation of God's Almighty Power, but, generally ſpeaking, the employing that Power ſo, as thereby to give Evidence to ſome important Truth, to eſtabliſh the Authority of ſome eminent Teacher, to convince them who did not yet believe, or to confirm ſuch as were ſtill weak and wavering. They, who will be at the Pains to conſider, and compare the Facts and their ſeveral Circumſtances, may quickly ſatisfie themſelves, that This was their general Intent; and will eaſily diſcern one or more of theſe Purpoſes to have been the Motives, even where they were not the Effects and Conſequences of them. They ought indeed to have been both; And we may juſtly think it matter of wonder, that they ſhould at any time fail of their intended Succeſs;

ceſs; when that hath been conſidered, which I deſire may be obſerved in the

2. *Second* Place. That there are few things, wherein Mankind ſeem to be more agreed, than in the Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Miracles, as an authentick and indiſputable Teſtimony, that the Perſons, entruſted with ſuch Power, were employed by God. This Senſe of the thing appears, from the Confeſſion and Practice, not of ſuch only, upon whom the Acknowledgment of the true God, and the Prejudices of Education, might be pretended to have Influence; but of Heathens and Idolaters too. Thus *Pharaoh*'s Magicians confeſs the Miracles of *Moſes* and *Aaron* to be *the Finger of God.* Exod. viii. 19. Thus, in the Controverſie between *Elijah* and the Prieſts of *Baal*, it was, without any difficulty accepted, as a fair Propoſal, that He, who anſwered by *fire from Heaven*, ſhould be unanimouſly ſerved and worſhipped: and accordingly, upon that Prophet's Sacrifice being conſumed, the Cauſe was immediately yielded. *For all the People, when they ſaw it, fell on their Faces and ſaid, The Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God.* 1 Kings xviii. 24 to 39. Thus *Eliſha* deſires, *Naaman* the *Syrian* might be ſent to Him, that his miraculous Recovery from his Leproſie might make him know there *was a God in Iſrael.* 2 Kin. v. 8, 17. And this effect it had; as appears by his ſolemn Declaration, that *he would thenceforth offer neither burnt offering nor ſacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the Lord.* Thus again *Nebuchadnezzar*, and after Him *Darius*, was ſo affected with the wonderful Deliverances of the Three Children, and *Daniel*, Dan. iii. & iv. as preſently to reverſe their impious Decrees, to put to death the Adviſers of their Puniſhment, to advance theſe peculiar Favourites of Heaven to the higheſt Truſts, and to enjoin the Worſhip of the only

ly True God, by a moſt ſolemn Ordinance, to take place throughout their whole Dominions. Can we, after all this, think it ſtrange, that, in a Country ſo much better informed, ſo much more accuſtomed to Events of this kind, a Learned Ruler of the Jews ſhould in theſe terms accoſt our Bleſſed Lord, *Rabbi,*

John iii. 2. *we know, that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him?* Or, that a mean Man, who had been born blind, ſhould take the Confidence to confront a whole Aſſembly of Phariſees,

ix. 32, 33. with this Argument, *Since the world began was it not heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, he could do nothing?* Or, that a Conſult of wicked Rulers ſhould aſſign this, as a politick Reaſon for conſpiring the Death of Jeſus; *This Man doth many*

xi. 47, 48. *Miracles; If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him?* Or *laſtly*, that our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf ſhould put the Credit of his Doctrine upon this ſhort Iſſue; *If I do not the Works*

x. 37, 38. *of my Father, believe me not; But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him?*

I forbear ſundry other Paſſages to the ſame effect: Preſuming, that theſe ſuffice to make it plain, how received a Teſtimony this of Miracles was, and what Succeſs it hath uſed to meet with, in all Ages and Parts of the World. The Obſtinacy of Some that have ſtood out againſt it, proves it indeed to have been not a compulſive or invincible Argument; for nothing can be ſo to Reaſonable Agents. But the Sufficiency of it hath been abundantly ſeen, as upon other Occaſions, ſo eſpecially in the Entertainment it prepared for the Goſpel, with all, whoſe Minds were not before block'd up, by thoſe two ordinarily im-

pregnable

pregnable Barriers, Wilfull Ignorance, and Worldly Intereſt.

To what we find in Scripture, concerning the eaſie and favourable Reception of True Miracles, our own Reaſon may add a ſecond Argument, from the Contrivance and Forgery of Falſe ones. For every Counterfeit ſuppoſes ſomething, not only of Reality, but of Excellence too, which it hopes to gain the Opinion of, by ſuch artful Diſſimulation. Thus Hypocriſie in Religion ſpeaks a confeſs'd Goodneſs in Piety and Virtue; and a plauſible Lye the Eſtimate of Truth. And, as there would be no falſe Jewels, or falſe Money, if true Stones and Standard had not both been, and been high in value too: So, had no Miracles been ever wrought, or had they not been, in the nature of the thing, fitted to ſucceed in the Purpoſes they were wrought for; It could neither have entred into any Man's head to pretend to them; nor could ſuch Pretences have turned to any account. The frequent Impoſtures of this kind therefore, which ſome think to take Advantage from againſt Miracles in general, ſeems rather to conclude the quite contrary way. And, inſtead of inferring, Becauſe many have been falſe, there were never any true: it carries a much better face of reaſon to ſay, that, if there had not been many confeſſedly True, it can hardly, if at all, be conceived ſo much as poſſible, that there ſhould ever have been One Falſe; Leſs yet, that any ſingle Man ſhould have been deluded by it.

This ſeems to be the caſe of Miracles, as to the End, and the Fact; I only add in the *Third* place, That the Nature of Theſe is ſuch, as renders them the moſt proper and convincing Evidences that can be, of the thing they are meant to prove; A Commiſſion, I mean, from Almighty God to the Worker of them, and the Truth of what he ſhall declare to us in His Name. And in this point, I hope, the Three fol-

lowing Conſiderations may be admitted for ſufficient Satisfaction.

1. *Firſt.* That by Miracles are properly underſtood ſuch Events, as exceed the Power of Nature and ordinary Means, and which the Agent could never effect by any Skill or Strength of his own. There are many Accidents unuſual and ſtrange, Many Compoſitions and Productions in Nature prodigious and monſtrous; Theſe happen very ſeldom, and for that reaſon ſurpriſe us very much, when they do. But becauſe the reſult of ſome ſecret Powers, and the uncommon coincidence of Cauſes, make them at leaſt poſſible to be accounted for that way: they are not, in ſtrict ſpeaking, Miraculous, though Strange, and full of Wonder. The ground of which Diſtinction lies in this, that ſettled Rules, and natural Cauſes, cannot be marks of a Preſence and Power immediately divine. The Notions of God and his Providence do all confirm that Remark of the Pſalmiſt, *He commanded and all things were created, He hath ſtabliſhed them for ever and ever, he hath given them a Law, which ſhall not be broken.* So that theſe regular Appointments in Nature are under the ſame Conditions with all other Laws; which cannot be ſuperſeded by any Authority, leſs than That, from whence they derived their Sanction at firſt. When any Subject then receives an Operation, of which it is not naturally capable; Or, which though it be capable of, yet this is by ſuch Means, as are not naturally fitted to produce it; Theſe Operations are miraculous. Nor need it here to give us any great trouble, that the Wiſeſt of Men cannot exactly determine, how far the Powers of Nature may go; ſince in theſe Matters it is enough, that there are many Caſes, to which the plaineſt Man alive may be as ſure, as he can be of any thing, that they cannot poſſibly go. And therefore, when dead Carcaſes are re-

Pſalm cxlviii. 5, 6.

ſtored to Life; When Diſeaſes, inveterate and incurable, are recovered; When natural Defects are ſupplied, by a Touch, or a Word, or at a Diſtance, and in an Inſtant, without any Application or Medicine; No doubt can remain, whether a Principle above Nature do not bring theſe marvellous things to paſs. And, ſince Men are a part of the Creation thus limited and reſtrained by Natural Laws and Powers, if They ſhall at any time over-rule and tranſcend theſe; What can we think, but that this is by the extraordinary aſſiſtance of the Common Creator and Lord; who reſerves to himſelf that incommunicable Character of Sovereignty, by which his ſtated Methods are ſet aſide? This then proves the Miracles of our Bleſſed Saviour, the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and other holy Men, to be the Works of God in and by them; that they were Inſtances far out of the reach of Humane Strength or Wiſdom; and beſide, above, or contrary to, the eſtabliſhed Rules of Natural Cauſes, and ordinary Providence.

2. *Secondly.* The conſtant Apprehenſions, which both Reaſon and Revelation have given us of God, forbid us to imagine, that he will employ his Power to deceive his Creatures. Of all the divine Perfections, none ſhine brighter, or are more amiable in our Eyes, than Truth and Goodneſs. The Former cannot atteſt to a Lye, nor the Latter ſeduce Men into dangerous and deſtructive Miſtakes. To theſe we are beholding for our Certainty in things of common uſe; and that, though Men differ ſometimes about the report of their Senſes, in matters of Speculation; yet all the World agrees in it, ſo far as is neceſſary for the ſupport and convenience of Humane Life. And if ſo good care be taken, in caſes common and of leſs importance, much more ſecure of it may we be, where God immediately interpoſes, and where a right or wrong Judgment is ſure to

prove of the laſt conſequence to us. For, What Idea can we have of a Cruelty more monſtrous, more perfidious, than to leave Men bewildred and loſt in their Eternal Concerns, Men that have proceeded with all poſſible Prudence and Caution, that have ſuſpended their Belief, till a Miracle took off the Scruple? To ſuſpect, I ſay, that Almighty God is capable of employing Infinite Power, and diſturbing the courſe of Nature, with a deſign to miſlead and delude ſuch wary, and honeſt, and teachable Men, is to deſtroy and ſubvert his Attributes, and leave our ſelves no Notion at all of ſuch a Being: Nay, for Him to permit the ſame Evidences to be produced for Errors as for Truth, is in effect to cancel his own Credentials, and make Miracles of no ſignificance at all. Thus much may ſerve to juſtifie Mens embracing that Doctrine, which comes confirmed by Miracles, that theſe are extraordinary Demonſtrations of God's Power; and that God, as a Being perfectly True and Good, could not ſet his Seal to a forged Inſtrument, nor will he ſuffer it to be ſo nicely counterfeited, as ſhould lead wary and well-intending Men into Deceit and Damnation. For this were to ſet Truth and Errour upon the ſame foot, by allowing both to produce the ſame Evidence, the ſame Signatures of His Direction and Approbation in their own behalf; and conſequently, to perplex the moſt important matters, and introduce Scepticiſm and eternal Confuſion.

3. *Thirdly.* Miracles have this peculiar Advantage, that they come home to the Mind preſently, and put Men upon Conſideration more powerfully, than any other Motive whatſoever. The comparing things, and the weight of the Reaſons produced for them together, is a work, that all People are not fitted for. And even They, who think themſelves moſt ſo, have yet often been impoſed upon, by falſe Colours, and

thoſe deceitful Arts of Arguing, which Men of Skill make uſe of, to caſt a Miſt before the plaineſt Truths, and to give the greateſt Falſhoods an air of Probability. But at the beſt, this is a Work of long and cool Thought, an Improvement acquired by very ſlow degrees. A Miracle, on the other hand, pierces quite through the Soul, ſtrikes all our Faculties at once, and, by offering it ſelf to our bodily Senſes, becomes an Argument for the meaneſt Capacities to judge of. It is not loſt in idle Aſtoniſhment and unprofitable gazing, but carries the Beholders to a ſpeedy Enquiry, and ſo ſurpriſes and inſtructs together.

Men immediately recollect, that this muſt be the Hand of God; from whence it is, that we find him ſtiled not only *He that doth*, but He *who alone doth, great Wonders*: and therefore Chriſt does moſt emphatically ſtile theſe *the Works of his Father*. They know, that ſo wiſe a Ruler does not uſe to go out of the common way, nor break in upon his own Laws, except upon weighty Occaſions. They are agreed, that the general reaſon of his doing ſo, is the giving Credit to ſome Meſſenger and Meſſage ſent by him: And hence the *Sareptan* Widow, upon receiving her Son brought to life again by *Elijah*, preſently breaks out into that natural Inference, *Now by this I know that thou art a Man of God, and that the Word of God in thy mouth is truth.* Hence the Multitudes, upon our Lord's diſpoſſeſſing an unclean Devil, cry out, *What thing is this? What new Doctrine is this? for with Authority he commandeth even the unclean Spirits, and they do obey him.* Then they feel themſelves excited to Attention and Reverence, and look for other collateral Motives of Perſwaſion. But 'tis the Miracle, that firſt turns the Scale, and ſets the Mind at large from Infidelity or Suſpenſe.

Pſ. lxxvii. 14. cxxxvi. 4.

John x. 37.

1 Kings xvii. 24.

Mark i. 27.

This ſhews the Force of Miracles, to rouze Men out of their unthinking Indifference to Holy things, and to determine their Judgments, when they apply themſelves to think in good earneſt: The Neceſſity of them to plant new Articles of Faith, becauſe no Man is bound to receive any Revelation as God's, from thoſe Publiſhers, who are not able to produce His Atteſtation of it. So good reaſon had the Jews to require Miracles of our Lord; So good had He, upon all Occaſions, to appeal to them; So inexcuſable was their Perverſneſs, when refuſing an Aſſent to his Doctrine, which he ſo frequently, ſo rightfully challenged, upon this account.

Let this ſuffice to be ſpoken of Miracles in general; The Uſefulneſs, The End of them, The Senſe of Mankind concerning them, The Acceptation and Effect they found with impartial and conſidering People; and Their natural Tendency to diſpoſe Men for Conſideration and Conviction. I now proceed to the Particular Miracle, ſet before us in the Goſpel for this Day. Wherein the following Circumſtances more eſpecially call for our Obſervation.

1. *Firſt*. The not working it till after ſome *Delay*.
2. *Secondly*, The prudent Manner of doing it. And
3. *Thirdly*, The Efficacy of it, when done.

1. *Firſt*. The not working it till after ſome Delay. To take this matter right, it is requiſite to obſerve, that the Virgin, in ſome pain, as it ſhould ſeem, for the Trouble her Friends would be under, for an Entertainment too ſhort for their Company, acquaints *Jeſus* with their want of Wine. To this

Verſe 3.

he replies, in Terms ſo ſeemingly rough, that Interpreters have been at ſome trouble about their Meaning. *Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come.* The

Verſe 4.

Complaint implied a deſire of Help from Him in this Exigence; But, in caſes, where a Heavenly Father's

Honour is to be the governing Principle, an earthly Mother's Authority is quite ſuſpended. And tho' He, who made all Times, could not be under Subjection to any, nor reſtrained in his Power, at one hour more than another; yet there was an Order to be obſerved, which would give a gracefulneſs and efficacy to all his Works. And Miracles were not to be wrought at all adventures, for gratifying the Curioſity of Standers-by, or the Importunity of Friends and Relations; but had their proper Seaſons, of which his own Divine Wiſdom could beſt judge, and was not to be directed in. This ſeems the moſt probable Senſe of theſe Words. In which, as we muſt not ſuſpect any thing of diſreſpect or indecent heat; ſo neither can we diſcover a poſitive Denial. For the next thing his Mother does, (after receiving that Rebuke, due for interpoſing farther than her Character could bear her out) is to order the Servants, that whatſoever *Jeſus* Verſe 5. ſhould ſay to them, they ſhould be careful to do it. Here then we have two things to enquire into, Why our Lord deferred this Miracle at all, and, Why, that ſeeming Refuſal notwithſtanding, he did it afterwards.

1. His Deferring it at firſt was highly prudent, to prevent all ſuſpicion of Oſtentation and Vanity. For, though, in the following part of his Miniſtry, we find him often complying with Peoples firſt Requeſts, yet his Circumſtances then and now were very different. When his Fame had been ſpread abroad through all the Regions round about, and every Tongue ſet forth his noble Acts; it better became him, as occaſions offered, readily to exert his Power. But at preſent he was not known to the World; His Diſciples were but few, and freſh Comers, and even his moſt intimate Acquaintance had not yet any due Apprehenſions concerning him. Now

He, that made the Glory of God and the Good of Souls his aim, was obliged to ſet out warily, and ſtop, as much as might be, the mouth of Prejudice and Cavil. And nothing could go farther toward fixing him a general Reputation, than Modeſty. To put himſelf forward of his own accord, or to yield to a Mother's firſt Motions, might look like an Eagerneſs to catch at Admiration and Applauſe, to fall in with an intemperate Zeal for advancing his own Honour, and a ſhewing what he could do, rather than diſcerning what was fit to do. And therefore in this the Humility and Wiſdom of the Bleſſed Jeſus appeared, that he tempered his Goodneſs with Diſcretion, drew back upon the Inſtance of his deareſt Relation, and ſtood upon the Reſerve for a more convenient Opportunity.

2. For anſwer that Requeſt he did afterwards, and that with very good reaſon too. Some from the Propriety of the Greek Expreſſion, have ſuppoſed his Mother to ſpeak before the Wine was out, and when it grew ſo low, that ſhe plainly ſaw there would not be enough. Now the Cuſtom of our Saviour's Miracles is, to come in to Mens Succour, when humane Helps are either paſt and ineffectual, or not to be had. The neceſſity therefore of that ſupernatural Supply intended them, was fit to be felt and manifeſt, in order to recommend the Benefit it ſelf, and to give the manner of their attaining it a power of making the deeper impreſſion upon their Minds.

Ὑστερήσαντος τοῦ οἴνου. V. 3.

Nor is it unreaſonable to imagine, that Affection and Reſpect, and an Inclination to repair the Concern of a lately reproved Mother, might work upon the Sweetneſs of his Temper. Leſs ſo ſtill to ſay, that the Vindication of his own Honour demanded this Miracle from him. For, when the Servants had been charged with Obedience to his Directions, Mat-

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ters were gone too far to retreat, without incurring the Reproach of Weakneſs, and diſappointing the Expectations that had been raiſed of him. This Reaſon ſutes very well with that of his declining it before. For, having guarded againſt all imputation of Forwardneſs and Vainglory, it was then prudent to juſtifie his Power. The failing in which might have proved of as ill Conſequence, as the attempting it ſooner, without a preſſing Neceſſity. In this we can only offer a probable Account. The Next thing furniſhes ſurer Grounds to go upon, I mean

2. The prudent manner of working this Miracle, apparent in the Care our Lord took, ſo to order all the Circumſtances of it, that there could remain no doubt concerning the Reality of ſo wonderful a Change.

And this appears, *Firſt*, from the Perſons choſen to aſſiſt in it. For, though the ſame Almighty Power, which every Year turns Water into Wine, by the impregnating warmth of the Sun, concocting the Juices of the Earth, and the Sap of the Trees, that produce it, could have done ſo by this, in a moment of time, without any Helper: Though he could with the ſame eaſe have created Wine out of nothing, and filled the empty Veſſels with a Word of his Mouth; Yet was he pleaſed to uſe the Miniſtry of Others, the Servants of the Houſe, and ſuch as could not be thought in any Confederacy with him. Theſe poured the Water in with their own hands, Theſe therefore were ſo many unexceptionable Witneſſes, that what themſelves knew to be common Water, was quickly after, by the ſame hands, drawn out generous Wine.

2. The ſame prudent care appears, *Secondly*, in the Veſſels ſingled out for that purpoſe. Which, the *Sixth* Verſe tells us, were *Six Water-pots of Stone, after the*

man-

manner of the purifying of the Jews. A Remark of great weight and ſignificance in this Affair. For the Jews, being commanded frequent Waſhings, to take off thoſe Legal Pollutions, which there was no avoiding in their daily Converſation; and they being nice in theſe Waſhings, even to a Superſtition; Every man took care to provide himſelf with large Veſſels, that he might never want Water at home, for any the moſt ſudden Emergency. Now this being deſigned for a holy Uſe, it was reckoned a Sin and heinous Profanation, to put any thing but Water into thoſe Veſſels. So that here was no room for ſuſpecting any thing of Wine, in thoſe Pots of Stone before.

Chryſ. in Joh. Hom. 22. Janſen Conc. Ev. cap. 18. Chemnit Harm. cap. 22. Matth. Hoſt. de Hydr. Critic. Sacr. tom. 9.

3. It appeared, *Thirdly*, in ordering thoſe Servants to *bear to the Governour of the Feaſt.* For ſuch a one it was the Cuſtom of thoſe Countries to have; a Perſon of Sobriety and Gravity, whoſe buſineſs it was, to ſee the Entertainment managed by his Directions, and to keep all, even the Gueſts themſelves, within the Rules of Decency. His Judgment and Palate therefore is referred to, as more accurate and leſs vitiated. Theſe Circumſtances all conſpired to advance the Credit of the Miracle; and they are all agreeable with the general method of our Lord; who does not, upon theſe occaſions, aim at Pomp and Shew, but Proof and Atteſtation; and labours not to aſtoniſh Men, except in order to perſwading and convincing them. Thus he did, and thus it became him to do, who honoured not himſelf, but the Father that ſent him; and ſought not his own Praiſe, but the Good and Salvation of thoſe to whom he was ſent.

Verſe 8.

4. Once more, I obſerve the Excellence of this Miracle, from the Quantity, and the Goodneſs, of the Wine. Of

See Matth. Hoſt. de Hydr. Capacit. tom. 9.

the

the former the *Sixth* Verſe, of the latter the *Ninth* and *Tenth* give us a particular account. So that, you ſee, As all other Conſiderations concur to recommend this Wonder; the Plenty, the Perfection of it, and the Bounty of the Worker, do ſo likewiſe. Even of that God, whoſe Power is never ſtinted, at whoſe Diſpoſal all Creatures are, and who, with the but *opening of his hand, ſatisfies the deſire of every living thing.* Pſal. cxlv. 16.

III. The Efficacy of this Miracle comes, in the *Laſt* place, to be conſidered. Of which S. *John* ſays, that in *this beginning of Miracles Jeſus manifeſted forth his glory, and his Diſciples believed on him.* Verſe 11. The importance whereof may probably be beſt underſtood, by taking notice of a particular Signification put by the Jews upon the Word *Glory.* Whereby they intended the viſible Marks of God's eſpecial Preſence with, and Reſidence among them, in the Tabernacle firſt, and afterwards the Temple. Hence their Ark is called the *Ark of the Teſtimony*, the *Dwelling* or *Tabernacle* of God. And when that Ark fell into the Enemies hand, the name of a Child deſigned to intimate ſo ſad a Calamity, is *Ichabod: The Glory is not*, becauſe, ſays the Text, *the Ark of God was taken.* 1 Sam. iv. 21. Hence *David*, begging to be reſtored to the place of publick Worſhip, the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, expreſſes that Happineſs, by *ſeeing God's Glory*; Pſal. lxiii. 2. and St. *Paul* ſays, that *over the Tables of the Covenant were the Cherubims of Glory* Hebr. ix. 4. *ſhadowing the Mercy-ſeat.*

But the ſame Apoſtle calls all thoſe things a *Figure* and a *Shadow* of Chriſt. Whoſe Incarnation S. *John* is therefore thought to deſcribe with a peculiar Elegance, when ſaying, that the *Word was made Fleſh*, and *ſet up his Tabernacle* among us, reſided in our Nature, and Ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. John 1. 14.

made

made a humane Body his Veil; In correſpondence and alluſion to that Veil in the Temple, which ſeparated the viſible Tokens of God's Preſence, from common Sight. Then he goes on, *and we beheld his Glory*, a Divine Preſence, not like that under the Law, of Rigour and figurative Importance, but ſuch as brought *Grace* inſtead of Severity, and *Truth* inſtead of Shadows. The word *Glory* then, applied to Chriſt, denotes the ſame God to have exhibited himſelf to us in This Perſon, who formerly exhibited himſelf to the Jews in Their Temple. And, by *manifeſting forth this Glory*, we are to underſtand, that Chriſt did ſomething, which plainly proved his Power to be divine; and argued the actual Preſence of God with and in his humane Body.

And, Who indeed leſs than God could have the Creatures of this lower World ſo abſolutely at his Diſpoſal, as to make them ſtart from their fix'd Laws of Being, and change their Natures and Qualities in an inſtant? He only could repeal theſe Laws, who made them. He only could alter their Forms, who at firſt appointed them. And when this was done, without invoking the Aid of any Higher Power, it was an evidence of no higher power to have recourſe to. It ſhewed, the Authority by which he did it, to be ſupreme, as well as the Creatures ſuch Authority was exerciſed upon, to be entirely his own.

I only add a few Practical Reflections, and will be brief in each of them.

1. The *Firſt* our Church hath drawn for me, in one of her excellent Offices; It is the Honour due to a Married ſtate. Had this been unbecoming the Purity of his moſt ſanctified Diſciples, would our moſt Holy Maſter, think you, have graced ſuch a Solemnity with his own Preſence? Would that Pattern, that Fountain of all Purity, have choſen a polluted Ordinance, for the Occaſion of his firſt Miracle?

Nay,

Nay, which is more, Would the Holy Ghoſt have repreſented the Union between Him and his Church, by that Union between Man and Wife? I urge not here the Conjecture, becauſe but a Conjecture, that this Feaſt was for the Marriage of that very *Diſciple whom Jeſus loved.* But I ought not to forbear, and will leave You to apply, that Character given by St. *Paul*, who, without limitation to Perſons of any Quality, declares, that *Forbidding to Marry* is one mark of *Seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils.* 2 Tim. iv.

Secondly. Let me, after the Example of many who have treated of this Paſſage, exhort all, who enter into that ſtate, to imitate theſe Perſons of *Cana* in *Galilee*, by inviting *Jeſus* to the Marriage. My meaning I cannot better expreſs, than in the words of the ſame Office, that we ought not to undertake ſo conſiderable an alteration of our Circumſtances, *unadviſedly, lightly, or wantonly, to ſatisfie the carnal appetite, but reverently, diſcreetly, adviſedly, ſoberly, and in the fear of God.* Which I take to be of that Conſequence to the Happineſs of Mankind, that ſcarce any thing can be more. And certainly no body ought to wonder at the Coldneſs, the Indifference, nay it were well if I could ſtop there, but I muſt ſay too, the Variance and Diviſions, the ſcandalous Separations, and the yet more ſcandalous Cohabitings, of the neareſt Relations; By which ſo many Families are undone in their Fortunes, diſhonoured in their Blood, tainted with Diſeaſes, corrupted in their Education, ruined by domeſtick Patterns of Vice; Theſe, I ſay, are Conſequences, which no wiſe man can think ſtrange, where ſo many Matches are made, in which the true Ends of them are never conſulted. Where Wiſdom, and Virtue, and Religion, and Agreeableneſs of Humour, and Modeſty of Behaviour, are wholly over-look'd; and the Beauty and Fortune

are the only Inducements. This indeed may be to call *Mammon*, or *Venus*, but it is perfectly to ſhut out Chriſt and his Diſciples from the Marriage.

Thirdly. I hope it will not, becauſe I know it ought not, be thought unbecoming my Profeſſion, to ſay, that this Paſſage ſhews, how little ground there is for that ſtiff and preciſe Temper, which condemns all outward Expreſſions of Mirth, by publick and ſolemn Entertainments. Our Lord's Example hath juſtified ſuch Meetings of Friends in more Inſtances beſides this; and indeed his Life throughout is a Pattern of Social Virtues: And, provided the Mirth be innocent, the Converſation inoffenſive, the Enjoyment of God's good Creatures moderate, I think no conſidering Man can deny, but that they are capable of ſerving many good purpoſes; and it is plain too, that they do not bring us under any neceſſity of Sin. So that, if any ſpiritual Inconvenience follow, the blame is not due to the things, but to the Abuſe of them. And that is no more than every thing elſe is liable to, as well as theſe.

Matth. ix. Mark ii. Luke xi. xiv. xix. John xii.

Laſtly. Let us intreat our merciful Saviour, That he would repeat this Miracle over again in every one of our Hearts. That He would take compaſſion on our Frailties, which render us dead and inſipid, weak and unſtable as Water: and that he would endue us with a generous and a ſtrong, even with his own heavenly, Spirit. That we may get above that Flatneſs and Coldneſs too common in holy Duties, and ſerve him with Sprightlineſs and Vigour. He, who anſwered at laſt the Requeſt of his Mother, will moſt graciouſly ſuffer himſelf to be vanquiſhed by Our Importunities. And Oh! that We, by the help of his Grace, may be able to draw out ſuch good Wine, as the great Governour of the Feaſt will condeſcend to accept: Even of that Feaſt, where He himſelf is the Bride-

Bridegroom, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Fit and prepare us all, Deareſt Redeemer, to ſit down with thee at thy Table, in thy Kingdom; and then conſummate thy Nuptials, and our Happineſs. Yea come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.

Amen.

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty and everlaſting God, mercifully look upon our Infirmities, and in all our Dangers and Neceſſities ſtretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Rom. xii. 16.

PARAPHRASE.

16. *BE not wiſe in your own conceits.*

16. Let not a vain opinion of your own Wiſdom blow you up into diſdain of others, or diſpoſe you to uſe them ill.

17. *Recompenſe to no man evil for evil. Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.*

17. Nay, if others uſe you ſo, do not return it in the ſame kind. In the mean while do nothing unbecoming your Character, nothing that may offend, or give any body an occaſion of uſing you ſo.

18. *If it be poſſible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

18. Live in Love and Peace with every body. And if ſome be ſo unreaſonable, that after all you can do, they will not live ſo with you; be ſure that the ground of this Diviſion do not begin on your part: and when begun, uſe all your endeavours to heal up the Breach again.

19. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.*

19. But I beg of you, by all the tender affection I bear you, take not the matter into your own hands by private Revenge, but leave that to God, and wait his leiſure to do you right: for, you know, the Scripture ſays, this belongs to Him, and you muſt not uſurp what he hath reſerved to himſelf.

20. But repay wrongs with kindneſs, and relieve the neceſſities of them that hate you:

20. *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink; for in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head.*

for this will either melt down your Enemy into Repentance for his faults, or add to his Puniſhment, if, after ſuch meekneſs and charity, he ſtill remain obdurate.

21. Never give any man that Advantage over you, that his doing a baſe or unjuſt thing ſhould prevail with you to do the like. But maintain your Virtue, and get the glory of ſoftening and vanquiſhing his Ill by your good nature.

21. *Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.*

COMMENT.

AFter thoſe Duties, which we are obliged to perform toward our Common Head, as myſtical Members of Chriſt's Body; After thoſe, which more immediately concern our Selves, with regard to the Station and Office appointed us to hold in that Body; After thoſe, to which our Brethren have a right, who ſeem ſenſible of the near Relation between us, and deſirous to diſcharge Their part; The Apoſtle now proceeds to direct our Behaviour toward ſuch, as either are not of that Body, or carry themſelves to us, as if they were not. So that the whole of what remains to be ſaid upon this Chapter, may not unfitly be reduced to that General Topick of Vertue, mentioned only in my laſt, but referred to this Diſcourſe, for the Conſideration due to it. That, I mean, of Meekneſs, and Conſtancy, under Perſecutions and Wrongs. In which the Scripture before us gives me a fair occaſion to obſerve, *Firſt*, The Methods proper for preventing ſuch Injuries; and *Secondly*, the Deportment, which becomes Chriſtians, when they have the unhappineſs of ſuffering under them.

I begin with explaining the Methods proper for preventing our falling under ſuch Injuries and Tryals.

1. The

1. The *First* of Theſe is a moderate Opinion of our Selves, and our Abilities, expreſs'd by *not being wiſe in our own Conceits.* Wiſdom is Verſ. 16. a perfection, peculiar to reaſonable Creatures, which, though all Men are far from declaring their perſwaſion of, by a becoming diligence for attaining it; Yet every man thus far declares it, as upon no occaſion to think his Honour more ſenſibly wounded, than by Reproaches for the want of it. And, as no fancied Excellence is apt to blow us up ſo much, as thoſe which raiſe the opinion of our own Underſtanding; ſo it may be truly ſaid, that no one quality diſpoſes us, either to do, or to reſent any Wrongs, comparably to that of entertaining lofty Conceits of our Sufficiency. For all Anger proceeds upon a Notion of Contempt, and the Sting of Provocation lies in the thought of our being treated, not only unjuſtly, but unworthily; That we are ſlighted and undervalued, and looked upon, as little, and of no conſideration, by them who take the liberty of uſing us ill. This Reflection chiefly puſhes us on to Revenge, that we may make them, to their coſt, know what we are, and how much we can do, to vindicate our Selves, and annoy Them. From hence it follows, that Men's Reſentments will naturally hold proportion, with that eſteem they have of themſelves, and ſuppoſe they deſerve from others. Hence *Solomon* calls it *proud* Wrath, and the Perſon that *dealeth* in it, *Proud and haughty Scorner.* Daily Expe- Prov. xxi. 24. rience proving, that the better and greater Themſelves, and the leſs Other People, are in their Eyes, the more jealous of Affronts, the more peeviſh and perverſe, the more contentious and fierce Men generally are, more diſpoſed to pick Quarrels where there is no occaſion, and more implacable and averſe to Reconciliation, where there hath been any real occaſion given. And, if this be ſo, as we plainly find and feel

it is, then it muſt needs follow too, that, the more favourable Thoughts we entertain of our Brethren, and the leſs partial we are to our ſelves, the nearer to a Level we come; And ſo ſhall be leſs apt, either to provoke, or to be tranſported beyond due bounds, when We ſhall, at any time, happen to be provoked, by Injuries and Indignities. And to this Level no Conſideration can be better fitted to reduce us, than That ſo very often urged already, of our being, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Wiſe or Ignorant, ſtill all *one Body* together *in Chriſt, and every one Members one of another.*

2. The Next Expedient, offered for this purpoſe, is to *provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.* By which we are to look upon our ſelves obliged, not only to all thoſe Duties, which the Laws of God or Man have bound upon us; but to all that Prudence and Decency in our Conduct, that may ſecure to us the Character of Diſcretion, as well as of Virtue. For there are infinite Occurrences in a Man's Life, wherein all that is *lawful* may be far from *edifying* or being *expedient*: Many Liberties no where forbidden, which yet are better not taken: Many Actions no where expreſly commanded, which yet are very fit to be done. And again, When we do theſe, or abſtain from thoſe, the very Manner, and Circumſtances of the thing, may prove of great moment, either for adorning and recommending, or for tarniſhing the Luſtre, and taking off from the Beauty and Acceptableneſs of ſuch Reſtraints or Actions. This opens a ſpacious Field for the exerciſe of our Wiſdom and Caution, and the End it hath principally in view, is Reputation and general Eſteem. The ſeeking whereof, by all fair means, is a Reſpect due to our Brethren: Who ought to be ſatisfied, that we pay a juſt deference to their Judgment, and are exceedingly deſirous to ſtand well with them.

Verſ. 17.

1 Cor. 10. 23.

them. And it is certainly a doing great right to our ſelves, by gaining Credit and Authority; Which, as it enables us to be more ſucceſsful in doing good, ſo will it prove one of the beſt Guards, againſt ſuffering evil. 'Tis ſo, by cutting off occaſion, from them that would be glad to find it; and by drawing down a general cenſure and deteſtation of our Enemies, by providing us with Favourers and Friends, and by hindering others from countenancing and abetting the unreaſonable Attempts of them, who uſe us ill, even where no occaſion can be found for their doing ſo.

This is the true ground of thoſe Exhortations, ſo frequent in theſe Epiſtles, that the Converts to the Faith would be careful to *walk in Wiſdom toward them that are without*; to *have their Converſation honeſt among the Gentiles*; to *give none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God*; to *adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*: and a great many more to the ſame purpoſe. Inculcated for this plain reaſon more immediately, that the Mouths of Gainſayers might be ſtopp'd, the Hands of their Adverſaries tied up, and the Inoffenſiveneſs, as well as Innocency, of their Lives, be their Security, againſt the Malice and Cruelty of thoſe perſecuting Ages. For, though many wicked People do really act againſt all Senſe and Reaſon, yet none are ſo abandoned, and loſt to Shame, as not to deſire to have it thought they do otherwiſe. And therefore it is obſervable, that the Primitive Perſecutions were conſtantly introduced by Calumnies; with an intent, that ill Impreſſions upon Peoples minds might prepare the way, and reconcile them to the Barbarities they were about to ſee inflicted. And accordingly, the Champions of this Religion were always more ſollicitous to guard

Col. iv. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 12. 1 Cor. x. 33. Tit. ii. 9.

againſt the Slanders, than the Swords of Perſecutors. As knowing very well, that to wipe away theſe effectually, was the moſt ready and effectual courſe of ſheathing, or at leaſt of blunting the edge of, the Other.

And ſurely, the Reflection upon our Union in Chriſt is, or ought to be, a very prevailing Motive, to that Care and Circumſpection, which hath ſo direct an Influence upon the Safety of the Body and the Honour of the Head; A Care, which advances the Credit of that Religion, whereby we are thus knit together, ſtrikes Gainſayers dumb, and is ſo neceſſary to preſerve even *our Good from being evil ſpoken of.*

3. The *Third* thing here enjoined, as a probable Method for prevention of Outrage and Injuries, we have at the 18*th Verſe*; *If it be poſſible, as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men.* S. *Peter* indeed asks that Queſtion, *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* And he had reaſon; for none, but ſuch as are monſtrouſly brutiſh, will. But yet, ſince ſuch Monſters there are to be found in the World, too many of thoſe, whom our Apoſtle elſewhere mentions under the Character of *unreaſonable wicked men*, the cautious manner of expreſſing this Duty was no more than needful. For Peace with all the World, though a moſt deſirable Bleſſing, may yet be bought too dear: and therefore we are not left free to ſeek it, upon any terms, not conſiſtent with the reſt of our duty. When Stedfaſtneſs to the Faith we ought to profeſs, when Zeal for the Truth and Glory of God, when Conſtancy and Courage in Virtue, are made Grounds of a Difference; and nothing leſs than our foregoing theſe will be accepted, for an Accommodation of it; in ſuch like caſes Peace becomes impoſſible. All we have left to do then, is to convince the World, that We are not

1 Pet. 3. 13.

2 Theſſ. iii. 2.

the

the Aggreſſors: that we neither begun the Quarrel, nor have a deſire to continue it: that, whatever can be reconciled with our higher Obligations, we are ready to do; willing to depart from our own right, though we cannot give up God's: always diſpoſed to be reconciled, and to forgive the Wrongs, for which we never gave any Cauſe or Provocation. This is *as much as in us lieth*, and This they who decline, are no longer true Subjects of the Prince of Peace, no Diſciples of that Maſter, who at his death bequeathed Peace to us, as the moſt valuable Legacy he could leave; no living Members of that Head, who vouchſafed to become our Peace-offering; no longer actual Parts of one another, when they rend the Body, diſquiet and devour their Fellow-members: in ſhort, when they do not endeavour to procure and preſerve, as they are taught to pray for, *Peace always by all means.* And thus I am, almoſt inſenſibly, brought within the compaſs of my Second Head, wherein I propoſed to conſider,

2 Theſſ. iii. 16.

II. The Deportment becoming Chriſtians, when they ſhall at any time happen to ſuffer under Perſecutions and Wrongs of any kind.

The *Firſt* Rule, for which purpoſe, I ſhall offer from thoſe words, *Recompence to no man evil for evil.* The Words indeed, if taken in their utmoſt extent, will include the whole ſaid here upon this occaſion. But I chooſe to treat of them, as a Rule diſtinct from the reſt, becauſe finding ſome of the beſt Interpreters applying them to a lower degree of Meekneſs and Charity, than ſome that follow after: and confining them to a Senſe, that denotes, not ſo much the doing Evil, as the forbearing to do Good, after the Example of another. If any one (ſay they) hath been wanting to You in Offices of Kindneſs, which you have very well deſerved, and had all the reaſon in the world

Verſ. 17.

to expect from him; let not that Refusal or Neglect in Him, provoke You to the like Refusal and Omission; but be sure to do Your part, even to Them, who have not done Theirs to You. Be the Reasonableness of thus understanding the Words before us, as it will, yet to be sure the Rule it self is reasonable, and a very necessary one to have Men put in mind of. For, how many may we meet with every day, who disclaim all thoughts of Malice and Revenge, and say, they would not for the World do their Enemies the least hurt, while at the same time they hold themselves privileged, and abundantly dispensed with, from doing them any sort of good? Whereas, in truth, whatever it be of kindness or respect, or any manner of courtesie, that others may justly claim, upon the account of Neighbourhood, or Relation, or their Condition and Quality in the World, or any Obligation, not directly founded upon Gratitude, or particular Friendship, or intimate Acquaintance, or the like; The denying this, upon any Offence or Omission of theirs, I apprehend to be a breach of Christian Charity, and of the Rule before us. The reason is, because such Omissions or Offence can dissolve no Obligations, besides those that result from the doing what was omitted, or not doing what offended; But it cannot, in the reason of the thing, have influence upon those, that belong to Men in other Capacities; and would have done so, whether any familiar Intercourse or Acts of Friendship had pass'd between us or not. And this may possibly be one reason for the place these Words have in the Chapter; such continuance of our kindness and regards to Them who have disappointed our Expectations of Theirs, being what the Wise and the Good cannot but value Us, and the Principle we are moved to do it by, very greatly for. So that the Connexion here is justifiable enough, when after *Recompensing to no*

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man evil for evil, we are immediately call'd upon, *to provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men.*

2. The *Second* Rule is that, of *not avenging our ſelves*, but rather, *giving place unto wrath.* By which is meant, that we ſhould by no means take the Cauſe into our own hands, and pretend to right our ſelves, by repaying Injuries and Affronts, with the ſame or greater. For which indeed it were an eaſie matter to produce ſeveral Reaſons, unanſwerable, would we but ſubmit to conſider them, as becomes Men and Chriſtians: Reſentment and Paſſion, and Partiality, and all that Phantaſtical Notion of falſe Honour apart, which ſuggeſt the direct contrary to this Command, and would almoſt perſwade Men, that they even do well to be angry, and take Revenge, and have recourſe to Violence, and the private Sword. But I may the better content my ſelf with theſe Few before us, becauſe to Men of Chriſtian Principles they will ſuffice; and to Them who are not ſo, none ever will. In the mean while, for the ſetting theſe in a more convenient and diſtinct view, I ſhall firſt obſerve, how high the Duty is carried, and then the Arguments made uſe of to enforce it. Verſ. 19.

3. The next pitch therefore of Virtue in this point, I muſt carry you back for to the 14*th Verſe*, *Bleſs them which perſecute you, bleſs and curſe not:* Which are, in ſignification the ſame, with thoſe words of our Bleſſed Lord himſelf, *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.* Suppoſing then, that even the hotteſt of our Paſſions ſhould not flame out ſo fierce, as to devour all our Humanity, nor make us ſatisfied with being the Executioners of Vengeance in our own Perſons; yet is not this enough. Not to revenge or puniſh may prove our Good-nature; but ſomewhat more is neceſſary to prove our Chriſtianity. We muſt not ſo much as Matth. v. 44.

wiſh that Calamity to come from any other hand, which we decline inflicting with our own. We muſt not imprecate upon an Enemy the Wrath of God, for the gratifying a private Reſentment; We muſt not take any pleaſure in the Judgments that befall him, without our wiſhing: nay, we muſt wiſh well to, and intercede with God for him. And, to put the Sincerity of ſuch Wiſhes paſt a doubt, we muſt our ſelves contribute our Aſſiſtance, toward his Comfort under, and Relief from, any Diſtreſſes, that ſhall overtake him.

4. For that's the laſt Rule at the 20*th Verſe*: *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirſt, give him drink.* The partaking of the ſame Nature, and the ſame Paſſions, being liable to the ſame wants, and feeling the ſame Uneaſineſſes from them, induce an engagement of a date with our very Being; One, that begun with it, and cannot be diſſolved but with it too. Since then our Enemy, though an ill or a perverſe Man, is ſtill a Man; no act of His, which does not make him ceaſe to be ſo, can make that Obligation ceaſe, that is founded in his being ſuch. And therefore this Duty, as rare as the practice of it is, hath yet its groundwork laid in natural Equity; and we never fail in the performance of it, without violence done to that ſelf-evident Rule, of *doing to others whatſoever we would they ſhould do to us.* Nay, by proportion, we are bound to ſuccour him in any imminent Danger or Extremity, as well as in thoſe of Hunger and Thirſt, ſpecified here. To ſuccour him, I ſay, where our Aſſiſtance may be of Service, to keep him from periſhing, and, even with violence done to our own moſt angry and moſt juſt Reſentments, to let him ſee, that it is not poſſible to deſerve ſo ill at our hands, that the heavy hand of God upon his Perſon, or his Fortunes, ſhould be matter of Triumph or barbarous Joy to us. I only add, in Confirmation of

what

what was even now ſaid, that the Paſſage I am upon is not the Apoſtle's originally, but cited by him out of the Old Teſtament, and conſequently, a branch of that Moral Law, to which the Jews were able to diſcern the fitneſs of complying. The greater ſtill muſt the Reproach needs be, upon thoſe Chriſtians, that ſhall ſtand out againſt it; whoſe Religion is intended, and excellently fitted, to ſoften their hearts and enlarge their bowels, and, in all inſtances of Humanity and Goodneſs, of Compaſſion and Mercy, far to exceed the Righteouſneſs of thoſe that went before them. Prov. xxv. 21.

St. *Paul* was very ſenſible, with what Difficulty theſe Commands were like to be received, which had a Paſſion to encounter, as importunate and vehement, as any that humane Nature hath put into our Breaſts; and therefore he takes care, not only to introduce and ſweeten them with that affectionate Compellation, *Dearly Beloved, avenge not your ſelves*, &c. but likewiſe to back and ſtrengthen them, with very powerful Arguments, the Force whereof is the *Laſt* thing to be conſidered upon this occaſion. Verſ. 19.

The *Firſt* of Theſe relates to Almighty God, The *Second* to our Enemies, The *Laſt* to our Selves. To each I ſhall ſpeak ſomething very briefly.

That more immediately concerning Almighty God, we have in thoſe words, *It is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.* Verſ. 19. Here we are put in mind, that God is the Judge and Governour of the World; that none of the Wrongs done to us eſcape his Obſervation; that He hath reſerved to himſelf the Prerogative of calling to account, and making the Injurious ſmart for them; that He will not be wanting in this part of his Juſtice and Power; that He hath appointed Methods, proper for the exerciſe of both thoſe Attributes;

and

and that, for Us to go out of thoſe Methods, by taking the Matter into our own hands, and carving out to our ſelves ſuch Satisfactions, as Rage and angry Reſentments ſuggeſt, is to uſurp upon Him, and preſume to do that, which no private Man upon Earth hath Commiſſion to do.

Now the Methods, provided by God for this End, are, either the Interpoſition of Laws and Governours, or elſe the Diſpenſations of his own Providence, by which the Fortunes and Events of Men are all ordered and diſpoſed. From the Former we are allowed to ſeek for convenient Redreſs, where the Caſe is of weight to bear us out, where the Conſequence affects the Publick Good and Safety, where the Impunity of the Offender would render his Wickedneſs inſolent and inſupportable. Where any of theſe is the Caſe, we are permitted, and upon ſome of theſe accounts we are even obliged, to ſee, that Mens Injuſtice be chaſtiſed, and made an Example of, for the reſtraint of their own Sins, and for the prevention of the like in others. But here we muſt be very careful, that the Principle we go upon be right; that the End we propoſe from ſuch Proceedings, be our own fit and neceſſary Reparation, not the gratification of our fretted Spleen; that our deſire of ſuch Puniſhment be determined, to the amendment of the Tranſgreſſor, the common Security, the honour of Juſtice, and Preſervation of Order; not to the detriment or ſhame, the vexation or miſchief of the Sufferer, but only ſo far forth, as they may contribute to theſe Purpoſes.

The Latter, that of God's immediate Providence, is a Remedy for us to depend upon, where the ordinary ones of Humane Laws and Puniſhments have either made no proviſion, or ſuch, as cannot conveniently be had. But this dependence muſt be limited by the Conditions juſt now mentioned. It muſt not

be

be ſuch, as takes actual ſatisfaction in contemplating and promiſing to our ſelves the Judgments of God, or the Miſeries of our Brethren, conſidered abſtractedly as ſuch. Rather indeed this Argument ſhould center in a confidence of our own Safety and certain Protection from above; Nothing being a more ſubſtantial comfort to them, who endure wrongfully, than that their being content ſo to do, and to wait his time and good pleaſure, rather than to ſeek for relief irregularly, is a committing of their Cauſe to God, a making it from thenceforth His cauſe; and, that the doing ſuch meek and patient Sufferers reaſon, is an act of Juſtice done to himſelf.

The *Second* Argument brought here againſt Revenge, and even for acts of Kindneſs to our Enemy, when his Calamities have reduced him to the need of them, is contained in thoſe words, *For in ſo doing thou ſhalt heap coals of fire upon his head.*

A Phraſe of doubtful import, and capable of Two ſignifications, both ſupported by great Authorities, both very appoſite to the deſign of the Place. The One, That, by our Courteſie and Charity we are much more likely to reduce them that hate, and have dealt ill by us, to a ſenſe of their fault, and by our Kindneſs melt them down effectually into deep Remorſe, ſincere Repentance, and ſuitable returns for ſo generous a Compaſſion. There being, it is to be hoped, but few Inſtances of tempers ſo inflexibly obſtinate and perverſe, as not to be won by Gentleneſs unmoved, and Pity undeſerved; as not to feel, and improve upon, the Reproaches of a Behaviour, ſo unlike their own, when preſerved by thoſe very Perſons, whoſe Harm and Deſtruction themſelves had wiſhed and laboured. Whereas, repaying Affront with Affront, and Force with Force, ſerves only to inflame Mens minds the more, to ſharpen the Contention, and perpetuate the Quarrel. And thus ſome underſtand

ſtand, by *giving place unto wrath*, the withdrawing out of the way, and leaving our Enemy to be angry alone; forbearing to heap new occaſions of heightning the Difference, and ſo conſtraining his Paſſion to cool and go out, for want of freſh fewel to keep the fire in. But when, to that Quietneſs and Compoſure of Spirit, we add the nobler and more heroick Virtues of Love and Mercy; when we ſeaſonably relieve the Extremities and Afflictions, which, meaſuring others by himſelf, he had reaſon to expect, we ſhould have inſulted over, and rejoyced in: This, like the Fire, uſed by ſome Artificers in preparing of Metals, cannot fail to make the hardeſt heart give and relent. And thus our Meekneſs and Charity recommend themſelves, for the very ſame Conſiderations, that run Men upon Fury and Revenge. The Deſign common to both is, to get the better of your Enemy: The Difference between them this, that Violence is not only ſinful, but generally unſucceſsful; but Sweetneſs and Humanity are both innocent, nay highly virtuous; and alſo ſo well fitted for this end, that, in the nature of the thing, one can ſcarce conceive it more than barely poſſible, that it ſhould ever be diſappointed.

But, in regard this Text is brought hither from the Old Teſtament, and therefore moſt reaſonably interpreted by the Idioms in common uſe there; and, in regard *Coals of fire* are generally made uſe of, to denote ſome very ſevere effects of God's Wrath upon the Perſon on whom they fall; therefore many have ſuppoſed That to be the proper Importance of this place alſo: and the *Wrath to be given place to*, that of God, to whom we ſhould reſerve the Puniſhment of them that injure us. And thus S. *Chryſoſtom* particularly, though ſeeming chiefly to * favour the former Conſtruction, does yet incline to think, this might be an artful Condeſcenſion

* *In loc. Tom. 5. Orat, 46.*

ſcenſion to Mens Infirmities. So making the Apoſtle in effect, to ſay; Better it were, that you ſhould utterly lay all thoughts and deſires of Revenge aſide: but, ſince that is a Perfection of Virtue, not to be expected from all, know, that even thoſe Deſires are more likely to be ſatisfied this way, than the other. For, the leſs you meddle in your own Quarrel, the more God will aſſert your Right. And if your kindneſs does not bring an Enemy over, his crime is the more inexcuſable, and his puniſhment will be aggravated in proportion. So that, did angry Men conſider at all, they would forbear avenging themſelves, as the proper courſe of expoſing their Enemy to a ſharper and more mighty Revenger, than it is poſſible for Them, or any other Creature, to be.

But, Can it then conſiſt with the Deſign of the Apoſtle, or with the Temper of Chriſtianity, to do Acts of Charity with a ſpightful Intent, and, under the Mask of Kindneſs, to work the greateſt Miſchief? Were not the Cruelty of letting an Enemy ſtarve in his Extremity, more deſirable to Him, more fair and ingenuous in it ſelf, than ſuch a treacherous Relief? And can it become Them, who are commanded to love thoſe that hate them, to contrive, or ſo much as to comfort themſelves with the proſpect of, their more certain Ruin? By no means moſt aſſuredly. We muſt lament, and pray, and ſtrive againſt this Conſequence. We muſt not delight in, we muſt not, without horror and ſerious concern, think upon that Indignation, which our bittereſt Adverſaries treaſure up to themſelves, by their hardneſs and impenitent heart. Their Eternal Sufferings cannot, upon any terms, be matter of juſt Satisfaction; nor their Temporal, in any other reſpect, than that of tending to their Humiliation, and effectual Reformation, to the change of their Minds and Methods, and preventing their blacker Guilt and ſorer Puniſhment hereafter.

And

And with theſe Limitations it is, that we are to underſtand the Judgments of God called down upon their Enemies, by *David*, and other holy Men: With theſe, I ſay, Where they ſpeak of their own particular Caſe, And not with a Spirit of Prophecy, where they ſpeak of Themſelves and their Adverſaries, in a far different Capacity, as Types of Chriſt, and his Perſecutors. In a word, we muſt do all we can, by Forbearance, Long-ſuffering, and Gentleneſs, to reclaim and reconcile them; but if they ſtill continue ſo implacable, that their Proſperity and our Safety can no longer ſtand together, we then are permitted to wiſh, and endeavour, and to bleſs God for, thoſe Sufferings, which their Perverſeneſs hath rendred the only means for Our Security and Preſervation. And thus the *giving place* to our Great Defender's Wrath, may become a Duty truly meek and Chriſtian. Thus the *Coals of Fire*, (of which Their Rancour is the proper Cauſe, our Charity, our Patience, but the accidental occaſion of *Heaping upon their Heads*,) may be a very innocent Subject of Conſolation and Joy to us.

3. The *Third* Motive, urged here againſt Retaliation of Injuries, hath a more direct reference to our Selves, and is included in thoſe laſt words of the Chapter, *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* When men contend in mutual Affronts and Ill-turns to one another, the thing each aims at, is to come off Conquerour at laſt: but in ſuch caſes both are diſappointed, becauſe in truth both are ſubdued. For there is one point, which every man is ſtrictly obliged to be jealous of: and while this is maintained, his Honour cannot ſuffer. For, what is Honour, truly underſtood, but a greatneſs of mind, which ſcorns to deſcend to an ill and a baſe thing? So long then, as our Virtue continues unblemiſhed, and Conſcience cannot reproach us; we are always ſuperiour in the Combat. But, when Reaſon and Religion

gion give ground, and Paſſion gets the upper-hand of theſe, our Impotence betrays it ſelf, and we are beaten from the Poſt, which it was our duty, upon no terms, to give up. It is not the voice of the Chriſtian only, but of all Philoſophy in general, that true Nobleneſs of Spirit is better ſeen, in deſpiſing, than in returning Injuries; in a conſtant tranquillity of Temper, than in Rage and Reſentment. And the modern Men of Honour, with their falſe Notion, would, by the beſt and wiſeſt of the Antients, have been exploded and diſdained, as the weakeſt, moſt deſpicable, and poor-ſpirited of Wretches. So much more neceſſary a Conſideration it is, what may be fit for Us to do, than what may be juſt for Others to ſuffer. So much indeed a greater vexation it is, to any Enemy, to rob him of the pleaſure of diſturbing us, to ſhew how much we ſlight, and are above, his impotent Malice; than to give our ſelves and Him the trouble of paying him never ſo home in his own kind. So much more likely to put an end to his fruitleſs Attempts of making us uneaſie; which is the ſence of overcoming Evil with Good. Since no man loves to run his Head againſt a Wall, or be always labouring in vain. But eſpecially, ſo much more to our own Security and Advantage, who are ſure to continue impregnable, while we retain our Temper and our Virtue; while we keep the reins of Paſſion in our own hand, and inſure to our ſelves an Almighty Protector, not only to take our part at preſent, but, which is better ſtill, to reward and crown us for ſtriving lawfully, even when ſuffering wrongfully.

And ſhall I need to ſay now, that all theſe Duties follow naturally upon our Union into one Body in Chriſt? Where is the Tenderneſs, the mutual Amity, the Care and Pity, due to thoſe Parts, whoſe weakneſs hinders the diſcharge of their reſpective Offices, between men who call themſelves Members,

but

but contradict that Profeſſion, by ſpighting, and grieving, and tearing, and devouring one another? Where the Correſpondence with, Where the Obedience to, that Head, who hath commanded us to love our Enemies, who was continually doing good to his Enemies, and ſo far from being taken off by thoſe Provocations they did, by all that their moſt enraged Malice could, give him, that at laſt he willingly died for his Enemies; who now ſtands at the right-hand of God interceding for his Enemies; whoſe merciful Providence ſuſtains his Enemies; and who is ready to receive and embrace, and ſave his Enemies to the uttermoſt; who courts them, and offers Reconciliation, notwithſtanding the great, the daily, the numberleſs Offences, repeated boldly, preſumptuouſly, maliciouſly, againſt him? This is our Pattern, which if we do not follow, neither will He be to any ſaving purpoſes our Head; This is his Spirit, which they who have not, are not of his Body: and They, who are not of that Body here, do hope in vain to be reckoned of it hereafter. Of ſuch Importance is it, that we lay this Relation to heart very attentively, and give all diligence to anſwer the ſeveral Engagements it brings us into. To which end, that my Diſcourſes upon this Subject may in ſome meaſure conduce, I ſhut the whole up with a Prayer, taught us by our excellent Church, very pertinent to the matter we have in hand:

Second Coll. for Good-friday.

Almighty and everlaſting God, by whoſe Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and ſanctified; Receive our Supplications and Prayers, which we offer before thee for all eſtates of men in thy holy Church, that every member of the ſame, in his Vocation and Miniſtry, may truly and godly ſerve thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

The

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

Matth. viii. 1.

PARAPHRASE.

1. *When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.*

1. At his descent from the Mount (called Christ's Mount) whither he retired with his Apostles, and where he had just preached his Divine Sermon, as he was going to a neighbouring City, (*Capernaum* probably) a Leper met him in the Field adjoining to the City, (where we are told there was an Infirmary for persons thus diseased) it not being lawful for them to be within the Cities.

Luke vi. *Mark* iii. *Luke* v. 12. *Luke* vii. 1. *Adricom. Tr. Neph.* 62. 69.

2. *And behold there came a Leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

2. This man in most humble and reverent manner kneeling, and falling down on his face, besought Jesus to cleanse him.

3. *And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his Leprosie was cleansed.*

3. Which accordingly he did, and condescended to touch him, (being, as a Prophet, above the Ceremonial Ordinances) and no sooner had he said the word, but the Leprosie was quite gone.

4. *And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thy self to the Priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a Testimony unto them.*

4. This Cure Jesus charged him not to divulge, at least till he had fulfilled what the Law ordered in common Cures of that nature. Which undergoing the Priest's Enquiry, and offering the Sacrifice, would testifie the Perfection of the Cure, the Power of Jesus to heal, and the Deference he paid to the Law yet in force.

Levit. xiv. *Mark* i. 44. *Luke* v. 14.

5. *And when Jesus was entred into Capernaum, there came unto him a Centurion, beseeching him,*

6. *And saying, Lord, my Servant lieth at home, sick of the Palsie, grievously tormented.*

5. As Jesus was come into *Capernaum*, a Centurion (who by an usual figure of Speech is said to do that himself which others do in his behalf and by his order) Compare *Matth.* xi. 3. *Luke* vii. 20. *Matth.* xx. 20. *Mark* x. 35.) did, by the Mediation of Friends, entreat Jesus to heal a Servant, whom he valued very much, now sick of a Palsie.

7. *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.*

7. Jesus having heard a good

Luke vii. 4, 5, 6.

good Character of the man, whoſe Piety and Charity were eminent) readily condeſcended to this Requeſt: and was now actually moving toward the Centurion's houſe.

8. 9. Hereupon a ſecond Meſſage was ſent, declaring, that he thought himſelf in no degree worthy the honour of ſeeing Jeſus in his Houſe, nor indeed, of approaching his Perſon with this Requeſt, upon which account he had interpoſed the good Offices of his Friends; Nor did he conceive his Preſence to be needful; for if His Orders, who was but a ſubaltern Officer, are punctually obſerved even in his abſence: much more (he was abundantly ſatisfied) would any Command be effectual in this matter, which Jeſus ſhould pleaſe to iſſue out, to whom he believed none ſuperiour in Power, and that all Nature was abſolutely at his Diſpoſal.

Luke vii. 6, 7.

8. *The Centurion anſwered and ſaid, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof; but ſpeak the word only, and my Servant ſhall be healed.*

9. *For I am a man under Authority, having Soldiers under me, and I ſay to this man Go, and he goeth, and to another Come, and he cometh, and to my Servant Do this, and he doeth it.*

10. This was an inſtance ſo very ſurpriſing in a Stranger, that Jeſus commended it as far ſuperiour to any he yet had met with in the native Jews. Not only ſo, but from hence he took occaſion alſo to foretell how many of the Gentiles would hereafter follow this noble Example. That great numbers of Them, by their Obedience to the Goſpel, would attain to and inherit the ſpiritual Bleſſings and Promiſes made to the Holy Patriarchs. While their own natural Iſſue, the Jews, who were at preſent the only viſible Church of God, ſhould be moſt miſerable through their own Perverſeneſs.

10. *When Jeſus heard it he marvelled, and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael.*

11. *And I ſay unto you, that many ſhall come from eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*

12. *But the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.*

13. After which Jeſus declared, that the Effect of this man's Faith ſhould be as conſpicuous, as the Virtue of it. Which Saying took place ſo ſpeedily, that the Perſons ſent from the Centurion, did at their Return back to his Houſe, find the Servant perfectly well, whom but juſt before they had left in ſo deſperate a Condition.

13. *And Jeſus ſaid unto the Centurion, Go thy way, and as thou haſt believed ſo be it done unto thee. And his Servant was healed in the ſelf-ſame hour.*

COMMENT.

THE Gospel for this Day presents to our Observation two Cures, wrought by our Blessed Saviour, both Speedy, both Miraculous, both upon Distempers past the common help of Medicine, both vouchsafed to Persons recommended to his Favour, by very extraordinary qualifications, of a stedfast Faith in, and profound Reverence for him. The Subjects are too copious to be treated of distinctly, and therefore I shall satisfy my self, with insisting on the Former. In which, we shall do well to consider,

I. The Nature of the Disease.

II. The Manner of the Patient's Address for a Cure.

III. The Success he found from this Address.

But in regard great part of bodily Infirmities carry some Analogy to the Miseries of our Souls, and our Blessed Saviour's Cures of the One are excellently contrived for the Benefit and Improvement of the Other; Permit me, I beseech you, to promote the Design of this Holy Season, in the Contemplation of the Mercy before us, by looking on the Leper in my Text, as an Emblem of our selves: and as I go along, to shew What our Disease is, How we should imitate Him in seeking, and By what means we do obtain, a Recovery of Our spiritual Leprosie.

1. *First* then. Concerning the Disease it self, these following Circumstances are remarkable: That a Leprosie is said to proceed from a general Corruption of the Blood and Juices, to render the Person tainted with it extremely loathsome and deformed, to be (in those Countries especially) of all Distempers the most spreading in the Body, and most Contagious to others. These are Qualities inseparable from the nature of the Disease; But, if look'd upon with regard to the No-

tions of the Jews, and their Law about it, thus it was, of all others, the moſt ſcandalous, and the moſt deteſtable. It ſeparated the Sick from all Civil, as well as Religious Communion; diſtinguiſhed him by all the outward Significations of Sorrow and Shame; was generally look'd on, as a Plague inflicted by God, for ſome enormous Crime, (of which Scripture furniſhes ſeveral Examples) thought ſo far above the power * of Art, that the very attempt to cure it by Medicine was eſteemed an impious Preſumption. It was dreaded, as the higheſt of all Legal Pollutions, and required great variety of Luſtrations, before the Patient could be reſtored to the Privileges of a Jew. Waſhings of his Body and Cloaths, Sprinklings of Blood, Burnt and Meat and Sin Offerings. Accordingly, the Deliverance from it is generally expreſs'd in Terms, that import not ſo properly Recovery, as Purification. Thus the Leper here ſays not, Lord, thou canſt make me Whole, but thou canſt make me *Clean:* and, upon granting his Petition, it is not ſaid his Leproſie was healed, but that it was *Cleanſed*. Of this Cleanneſs the Prieſts were to make Declaration; In order whereunto, ſeveral Marks were appointed for the Direction of their Judgment: One of which is ſo very remarkable, that I ſhall conſider it particularly by and by. Mean while let it ſuffice to ſay, that a large account of this whole matter is contained in the Ordinances concerning it, at the *Thirteenth* and *Fourteenth* Chapters of *Leviticus*.

Numb. xii.
2 Kings v.
2 Chron. xxvi.
* *Ader de Morb. Evang. cap.* 1.
Critic. Sacr. T. 9.
Matth. xi. 5.
R. Menach. on Levit. xiii.

Verſ. 2.

Verſ. 3.

Now, what Leproſie was then to the Body, the ſame, in proportion, and at all times, is heinous and wilfull Sin to the Soul; It reſults from depraved Humours, a tainted Will, and inflamed Paſſions: It is noiſome and odious in the ſight of God and Man:

expreſſed

expreſs'd for this reaſon by *Wounds*, and *Bruiſes, and putrefying Sores.* It is rife and catching, ſwelling from leſs to greater, and by a fatal Fruitfulneſs multiplying from One to Many: waſting the Conſcience, eating away the ſound part, and ſhedding its Venom upon as many as come within the reach of its Infection. Inſomuch, that the ſubtileſt Poyſon, the moſt peſtilential Vapour, does not inſinuate it ſelf more ſpeedily, more mortally, than This. Hence every man is warned to keep his diſtance, and not tempt a danger by too free and familiar approaches; not only to refuſe his *Conſent*, *when ſinners entice him*; but not *to ſtand in their way*, not *to ſit in the ſeat of the Scornful*, not *to keep company with vain perſons, nor have any fellowſhip with the deceitful.* To conſider, as the Apoſtle ſays, That every word of Theirs eats like a Canker, looſens our Principles, diſſipates our good Intentions, enters and emboldens us in Vice; That Pitch may as well be touched without defiling, and Fire taken into a Garment without burning, as men of evil Example be frequented and delighted in, without contracting Soil and Damage from them. So applicable is that of *Solomon* to every one of profligate Converſation, *Their houſe is the way to hell, and leads down to the Chambers of Death. Let not then your heart decline to their ways, and go not aſtray in their paths. For many ſtrong men have been ſlain by this means, and whoſo cometh near them ſhall not be innocent.*

Iſai. i. 5.

Prov. i. 10.
Pſal. i. 1.
xxvi. 4.
2 Tim. ii. 17.
Eccluſ. xiii. 1.
Prov. vi. 27.
Prov. vii. 25, 26, 27.

So near is the Reſemblance between the Leproſie of the Outward, and that of the Inner Man, with regard to its Nature and its Conſequences. Each a noiſome, a mortal, and a contagious Diſeaſe. Some Likeneſs there is too between the Chriſtian, and the

Jewiſh Laws; though Ours by no means anſwer in the rigour of the Execution. We are commanded to

Rom. xvi. 17. *mark bad men, and thoſe that cauſe Diviſ-*
ons and Offences, and to avoid them; to
2 Theſſ. iii. 6. *withdraw our ſelves from every diſorderly*
1 Cor. v. 11. *walker*: With a *fornicator, or covetous, or*
an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or
1 Tim. v. 20. *an extortioner, no not to eat*; *They that ſin*
are to be rebuked before all, that others alſo
may fear: and, if milder methods are thrown away upon them, to be excluded the Society and Privileges of Chriſtians. Which, from the miraculous Scourges attending the Church's Cenſures in thoſe early

1 Cor. v. 5. days, is called, *delivering ſuch over to Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the Spirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus.*

If theſe Ordinances be not obſerved, in their due extent of Severity, we owe the Misfortune to our own Licentiouſneſs, and the general Corruptions of the Age, to which Providence hath reſerved us; For wholſome Rules, and ſtrict Adminiſtrations, ask proper Seaſons and Circumſtances to render them practicable. And Men are never more miſtaken, than when they imagine, that even the beſt Governours can always do, all that they think fit to be done, in order to a thorough Reformation. But then the Conſequence of this Unhappineſs, in reaſon, ought to be, not the taking Courage in evil doing, from ſuch unhappy Remiſſneſs or Diſability. But, the leſs care the Publick is qualified to take of us, the more ſhould every one take of himſelf: lament thoſe wants of neceſſary Reſtraint, which are not in his power: and ſtop the growing Danger, by his own private act, which nothing from without can render ineffectual.

The Parallel holds farther yet, in the Cure of this Diſeaſe. For, as that other Leproſie was repu-

ted

ted a ſtroke of Divine Vengeance, not to be healed by Humane Applications; So This of the Soul is an effect of God's wrath, when provoked to withdraw his Grace; and, in juſt puniſhment to Mens Obſtinacy, ſuffering them to fall from one Wickedneſs to another. Nor is the Recovery to be had from any other hand. The moſt refined Contrivances of Reaſon, and Schemes of Morality, and all the crafty Inventions of mercenary or ſuperſtitious Men, are broken Reeds; They may ſerve perhaps to skin over the Wound a little, with the Ignorant and Credulous; but the Conſcience, in the mean while, is rather deluded, than quieted. Here muſt be a real Cleanſing too, a ſprinkling with Blood, and a Sin-offering, that is, in the true and ſpiritual ſenſe of the Law, Repentance and Reformation, and the Sacrifice of Chriſt applied to the diſtempered Party. The Prieſt can declare the Men clean, when they are ſo; but neither His word, nor all he can do, will make them accepted for clean, when they are not ſo. It is the *Blood of Jeſus Chriſt which cleanſeth us from all Sin*; and this Remedy is left to be applied upon certain Conditions. But They, who hope to obtain it otherwiſe, purchaſe to themſelves only a Dream of Safety, and the Paradiſe of Fools. 1 John 1. 7.

I do not forget my ſelf to be ſtill accountable for One Circumſtance, hinted at before, in the Jewiſh Law of Leproſie. 'Tis, that the Perſon, whoſe Sore came out at once, and covered his whole Body, is pronounced Clean; Whereas others, in whom the Plague diſcovered it ſelf about one, or a few parts of the Body, are ſentenced as Unclean. They, who have undertaken to explain this Law, aſſign Two reaſons for that Ordinance. Either, that ſuch an Univerſal Scab argues the Venom to have ſpent it ſelf, Lev. xiii. 12, 13. *Ainſworth.*

without detriment to the Strength and Soundneſs of the Patient; Or, that this Spreading proves no great Malignity ever to have been in ſuch a Diſeaſe at all. For, as Rivers, when penn'd up in a narrow Courſe, are deep and ſtrong, and eat away their Banks, to force a Channel which they did not find: but, when enlarged, they glide away in ſhallow Streams; So this Diſeaſe, ſay They, when rank and fierce, enters deep, gnaws away the kindly Fleſh, ſeizes the Vitals, and penetrates the very Bones and Marrow; but when of a more favourable and gentle kind, it diffuſes and loſes it ſelf, is rather a Scurf, than a formed Leproſie: and, though ſome Defacing, yet eſcapes the Cenſure and Shame of the Law.

Munſter. *Clarius.* *Grotius.*

Now this Account, to Me, appears not unfitly to figure the Condition of Mankind, in relation to Sins of Infirmity, and Sins of Preſumption. The Former we are full of, and the Frailty of humane Nature expoſes us to frequent Commiſſions of them. The Latter, though but Few, though but One, yet, if of a grievous kind, does yet contribute more to the Sickneſs and Danger of the Soul, to the Hardening of the Conſcience, to the Scandalizing our Brethren, to the Reproach of our Religion, than the dayly, hourly Failings, in point of ſtrict Duty, conſequent upon the Weakneſs of corrupt Nature. Theſe do not deſtroy the Peace of our Minds; they are pitiable and excuſable; incident to Good People; and, provided we lament, and pray, and ſtrive the beſt we can, againſt them, they do not cut us off from Chriſt. But the Other give deep and deadly Wounds, becauſe they argue a Mind violently bent, and a profligate Senſe in the Perſon indulging them. In One caſe, the *Righteous falls ſeven times a day*, and yet riſes again; but, in the Other, the deliberately *Wicked falls into miſchief.* The reaſon is, Becauſe the Former is

ſurpriſed,

ſurpriſed, and would ſtand better if he could; But the Latter might ſtand, and will not. He ſees the Precipice; and knows the Danger, and caſts himſelf down headlong, and will not be withheld from his own Deſtruction. So that though Both have their Spots, yet the One is *the Spot of Children*, and the Other of *Lepers*. Concerning which having already ſpoken ſo largely, I think it time to proceed to my

II. *Second* Head. Under which I propoſed to conſider, The Manner of this Leper's Addreſs to Chriſt for a Cure; and, in agreement to, and purſuance of that Pattern, how it will become Us to apply for the Forgiveneſs of Our Sins.

Now, in the Deſcriptions given of this matter, we find *Firſt*, manifeſt Tokens of the Man's Concern for his preſent Miſery, and earneſt Deſires to be releaſed from it; expreſſed by *coming* to *meet Jeſus*, and *beſeeching him*, Mark i. 40. Luke v. 12. 1. *Secondly*, Great Reverence, in that he is ſaid here to have *Worſhipped* him; and, in the parallel places, to have done That in a manner the moſt obſequious and lowly; for they tell us, he did it by *kneeling down*: nay, and not content with that, he added Proſtration too; for St. *Luke* relates, that he *fell on his face* before him. We may diſcover, *Thirdly*, a firm and undoubted Perſwaſion of Chriſt's Ability to grant his Requeſt; conſequently, that he thought his Power Divine, and that too a Power, of which he had the free Exerciſe and diſpoſal. This Aſſurance is declared in terms the moſt ſignificant that can be. He ſays not, If thou wilt pray to God on my behalf, he will hear thee, and cleanſe me; but, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* The Difficulty that appeared to Him, was not, Whether Chriſt had ſo great a Power as this came to; but, Whether he would condeſcend to exert it upon his account: and there-

2. 3.

fore

4. fore, in great Humility, which is the *Fourth* Qualification remarkable in this Addreſs, he recommends the matter to his Conſideration; As being ſatisfied, that he was Maſter of his own Favours, and beſt knew when to grant, and when to refuſe. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* Thus not preſſing his Petition with an indecent and clamorous Importunity, but referring himſelf entirely to his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to determine what ſhould become of It and Him.

In proportion to the ſeveral Parts of this Example, it is neceſſary,

1. *Firſt.* That Forgiveneſs ſhould be a Bleſſing of our own Seeking, and that it be ſought in a very affectionate and importunate manner too. We are not to imagine, God will thruſt this Favour upon us; He hath already ſhewed himſelf gracious and condeſcending even to Aſtoniſhment, in ordaining ſuch Methods for our Redemption, in *providing himſelf a Lamb*, the Son of his Love, *who takes away the Sin of the world by the ſacrifice of his own Blood.* He hath brought Salvation home to our doors, publiſhed a Goſpel of Reconciliation and Peace, uſed all Inducements and Indearments, poſſible for a Rational Creature to be acted upon by, to reclaim, to wooe, to win us, to gain our Acceptance of our own Happineſs. And all the part left us, is, to be prevailed upon to accept. But then we muſt accept, as becomes ſuch a Gift; with great Thankfulneſs and godly Zeal. The Condition is, *Ask, and ye ſhall have*; and pray remember, this is a Condition, propounded not only to Creatures, but Criminals. Criminals, convict not only by the Laws, which Intereſt, as well as Duty, bound them to obey, but by the ſad Reproaches of their own guilty Conſciences.

If this then be the Caſe of You, and Me, and every Man breathing; Let us turn our Eyes upon the

wretched Malefactors, on whom Verdict and Sentence are passing, and see what Nature, and Love of Life, prompt Them to do. Look upon their Tears, listen to their piercing Cries and Groans, observe their bended Knees and wringing Hands, their doleful Accents and Obtestations: and let us learn from These, at once to beg, and how to beg, a Pardon. Imitate, at least, Their Sorrows, and their Supplications; Be not sullen and impenetrable, but remember, thou hast a Judge, armed with Thunder, to deal with. Consider, Thy Offences are more and greater, the Sentence due to Thee more dreadful, the Punishment more insupportable; The Chain of thy Sins, wherewith thou art tyed and bound, a heavier load than any Irons of an earthly Malefactor. Let not then Nature out-do Reason and Grace. Let not a short perishing Life excite stronger Passions, than a future and eternal one. Let not the Pains of a Moment, and the Scandal of a Gibbet, be deprecated with more moving Concern, than the Torments of Hell, and *everlasting Shame and Contempt*. A Deliverance from These deserves all thy Application; If These be not averted, Thou art undone for ever; They hang over thy Head, and cannot be averted, but by Prayer, by coming with this Leper, and worshipping, and beseeching. *O kiss the Son* therefore, *lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way*: Ye have already *kindled his wrath*, O serve and approach him *with Reverence*. Which is the

2. *Second* Qualification, taken notice of in this Address to our Blessed Lord, and expressed by this Person's *worshipping*, *kneeling down*, and *falling on his face*, before Christ. Now these are bodily Actions, meant for so many Significations of a mind full of respect. And, in truth, such outward Testimonies of Zeal are so far from needing to be proved lawful,

Matth. viii. 2.
Mark i. 40.
Luke v. 12.

ful, that they, in a manner, prove themſelves neceſſary. For, it is ſo natural with the Body, to conform it ſelf to the preſent poſture of the Soul, when the Impreſſions there are at all vigorous and lively; that every part does, as it were mechanically, conſpire to ſpeak the Reſentments within. The Tongue by Speech, the Countenance by its Air and Form, and every Limb by Geſtures, ſuited to its Capacity and the preſent Occaſion. So that They, who cry down, or are manifeſtly void of, ſuch outward Signs of Devotion, ſtand in need of all our Charity, to believe, that their Spirits are ſo ſenſibly, ſo powerfully affected within, as they would have us think them. We can diſcern the ſame Impreſſions of Joy and Grief, and Love and Fear, in common caſes, upon Them, as upon our ſelves, or other People. Why ſhould they then remain, to all appearance, unmoved and ſtupid, in Occaſions of infinitely higher concern to them? Why ſhould not Grace, and the ſo much boaſted Spirit, provoke the ſame Demonſtrations of an inward Affection, that Nature plainly does? This, ſure, is very hard to conceive, and harder yet it is to ſay, why thoſe Bodies, which ſhare in the Redemption, ſhould not come in for a ſhare of the Devotions that ſeek it. Away, my Brethren, away with ſuch ſenſeleſs Irreverence! How can you expect, God will grant a Bleſſing, for which you ſhew no manner of Sollicitude? Would you behave your ſelves ſo unconcernedly before an Earthly Judge? If therefore no Marks of Reſpect, or Paſſion, would be eſteemed too much for ſuch a Tribunal, do, I beſeech you, as our admirable Liturgy exhorts you every day to do, and as the Leper here ſets you a Pattern, *O come and worſhip, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord your Maker.*

Pſal. xiv. 6.

3. As little Queſtion can there be made, *Thirdly*, whether we be not obliged to copy after this Example,

ple, in a firm aſſurance of Chriſt's Ability to heal us, and ſaying from the heart, *Lord, thou canſt make me clean.* Which, ſo far as relates to the matter now in hand, is Relying entirely upon his Meritorious Sufferings; acknowledging, that he hath made ample Satisfaction to the Divine Juſtice on our behalf; and believing the Efficacy of his Sacrifice, to as many as ſhall put themſelves under the Conditions, appointed for being purged and abſolved by it. For this Truſt is the proper Foundation of all our Prayers. He that confeſſes himſelf a Sinner, does, in that very act, proclaim his Miſery, diſavow all Deſert, all that can incline God to love or favour him for his own ſake. He ſtands condemned out of his own mouth, as one, to whom the Extremity of Vengeance is juſtly due: and declares, that, if Salvation be attained, this muſt be owing to ſome other hand. And, ſince God hath given *no other name in heaven, or earth, by which man muſt be ſaved, but only the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; He, who repoſes not his Confidence in Him alone, can have no reaſonable Encouragement to ask or expect Remiſſion of Sins. Acts iv. 12.

4. But, in regard we have been taught by the firſt Elements of our Religion, that the *Sacraments are ordained by Chriſt himſelf, as means generally neceſſary to Salvation*; and, that One neceſſary Prediſpoſition to the worthy partaking of theſe Sacraments, is a *lively Faith in God's Mercy through Chriſt*; there may perhaps ſeem ſome ground for queſtioning, whether we ought, whether it be allowed us indeed, to imitate this Leper's Petition, in the *Laſt* thing obſerved, or expreſs our ſelves in terms ſo full of Doubt and Diffidence, as *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.* My Meaning is, whether the Faith in God's Mercy, required from us, do not imply a full Aſſurance, not only that he can, but that he moſt certainly will, hear, and forgive, and cleanſe us. Church Cat.

Now,

Now, for our Satisfaction in this Point, we need only examine, What is the proper and genuine importance of that Expreſſion, in the Caſe before us. This Leper muſt, in reaſon, be ſuppoſed to have formed his perſwaſion of Chriſt's Ability to help him, by the ſight, or the fame, of ſome former miraculous Cures. But, the ſame Miracles were inſtances of Mercy too, and muſt have created an Opinion of his Goodneſs, as well as his Power. I ſay, they muſt have done ſo: Becauſe we know, from conſtant Experience, and the nature of the thing, that Either of theſe Qualities, ſingle and apart, is not an adequate Encouragement for our Requeſts. If we be fully ſatisfied of a Friend's good Wiſhes and kind Intentions, but ſenſible withal, that, though fain he would, yet he cannot, give us the Aſſiſtances we want, we ſpare our Selves, and Him, the trouble of an Application. If, on the other hand, we know the Power of an Enemy, or a Stranger, to relieve us; we either ask it not at all, or not till, by employing proper Inſtruments, we have prepared the way to his Affection, and diſpoſed him to employ that Power in our Intereſts. The preferring of every Petition then proves, that we hope, and think, that neither Ability, nor Inclination, to grant, is wanting in the Party addreſs'd to. And, if the Leper ſpoke in a ſort of deſponding ſtrain, this does not argue, that he diſtruſted Chriſt's Beneficence in general, (which had he done, he had not asked at all) but that he feared his own Unworthineſs to partake of that Beneficence in particular. And ſo theſe Words expreſs, not the Weakneſs of his Faith, but the Greatneſs of his Humility.

In like manner are We too enjoyned to Believe God's Mercy through Chriſt; that he will *ſpare thoſe who confeſs their Faults, and reſtore them that are penitent*; for, without this Perſwaſion, we ſhould be deſtitute

ſtitute of any ground, any rational Motive, to Pray, or to Repent at all. But we may, notwithſtanding, very juſtly doubt, Whether we confeſs our Faults as we ſhould do, at the ſame time that we reſt perfectly aſſured, God will not fail to ſpare us, if we do ſo. And the Belief, that we ſhall be reſtored upon ſincere and effectual Repentance, does not, by any means, infer a Certainty, that our Repentance is effectual and ſincere. The Firſt is a General Truth, built upon plain and uncontroulable Revelation, upon ſolemn, repeated, and inviolable Promiſes: and to disbelieve This, is to diſpute the Juſtice and Fidelity of God, who cannot lye. But, whether that General Truth be applicable to Our Particular Caſe, whether we be ſuch manner of Perſons as have a Title to thoſe Promiſes; This Second is a new, and very diſtant Enquiry from the Former. This depends upon a thouſand Circumſtances, relating to the preſent ſtate of our Souls, to the conſtant Tenure of our Lives; and the doubting of This, is only to doubt, and fear, our own Selves, who may be, and it is but too plain, are, Creatures exceeding frail, and fickle, and fallible. To ſay all in one word. To queſtion, Whether God will forgive Sinners, is to queſtion, Whether he will be as good as his Word, though we perform the Condition required: And this is a Sin, a diſhonourable Reflection upon Him, and a Fundamental Errour in Religion. But to queſtion, Whether he will forgive You, or Me, or any other determinate Sinner, is only to queſtion, Whether You, or I, or that Perſon, have performed the Condition, and be duly qualified for Forgiveneſs, according to the Terms upon which it is promiſed. And this, ſure, is a Doubt, that many times may be very juſt, very uſeful, and very commendable.

For Who is there, indeed, among us all, the moſt circumſpect, the moſt devout, the beſt diſpoſed of Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, though he be, without Occaſion for ſuch a Check from within, ſuch an Opinion of his own Unworthineſs? Which of us can look back, I do not ſay upon his Faults, (Thoſe are a black and gaſtly ſight indeed) but even upon his Acts of Devotion, and Penitence, and Turning to God, without a ſecret Shame, and ſenſible Regret? How many ſad Relapſes into Sin, How many feeble Reſolutions, How many broken Sacramental Vows, does even this beſt, and moſt comfortable Proſpect of our Lives, preſently alarm us with? And how are we ſecure, that thoſe of This, or any other Day, ſhall be more firm, and more ſucceſsful, than the Paſt? And if ſo, How can we forbid them, who ſo oft have been deceived in themſelves, ſtill to go on in fearing and ſuſpecting themſelves? In truth, How can we anſwer it, ſhould we forbear exhorting and conjuring them ſo to do? that ſuch a holy Jealouſie may awaken their Care, that the Remembrance of their former Failings may render them more watchful over their own treacherous Hearts, more prudent in the midſt of Snares and Temptations, more ſtrictly conſcientious to ſtrengthen, to recollect, to charge themſelves home, with their Promiſes of better Obedience, for the time to come? Eſpecially, that a becoming Diffidence in their own very poor Performances, may effectually conduce to their Humiliation, and clip the Wings of that Security and ſpiritual Pride, which, of all other Vices, moſt obſtructs our Improvement in Virtue, and our Acceptance with God. For the Humble are his Delight; and theſe will never think their Piety diſparaged, by praying in the modeſt Words and Meaning of this baſhful Leper, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean.*

III. And thoſe that pray with the ſame Diſpoſition, he not only *can*, but *will make clean*. For my Third and laſt Head conſiſts of the Succeſs this Petitioner

oner found, and the Methods of his Recovery, in thoſe words, *Jeſus put forth his hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his Leproſie was cleanſed.* From whence, I only beg you to obſerve the Readineſs of our Dear Redeemer to ſhew Mercy, The Efficacy of ſuch fervent Prayers to procure it, The Suddenneſs and the Perfection of the Cure. And as eaſie, as powerful, as ſpeedy, will our Spiritual Recoveries be, provided we prepare our Hearts, and be equally fitted for that Mercy, which only waits a Diſpoſition in us, proper to receive it. Once more, I cannot but take notice of our Bleſſed Lord's marvellous and moſt amazing Condeſcenſion, who, though able to have healed with ſpeaking the word only, yet diſdained not to touch the poor polluted Wretch. Even ſo, Scorn not Our polluted Hearts, O meek and gracious Saviour, but touch them in much Mercy and Power, though deformed with the Leproſie of Sin, and defiled with long and manifold Uncleanneſs. Put forth not thy Hand only, but the renewing Graces of thy Holy Spirit. Oh enter into us, dwell with us, and reign in and over us, that we may alſo live and reign with Thee for ever. And ſince, till that bleſſed time come, we muſt be content to continue liable to many Weakneſſes, and great Temptations; Hear, we beſeech thee, the Petition proper to this Day, That thou would'ſt deal with Us, as with this happy Leper, *Mercifully look upon our Infirmities, and, in all our Dangers and Neceſſities, ſtretch forth thy right-hand to help and defend us, O Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

O God, who knoweſt us to be ſet in the midſt of ſo many and great Dangers, that by reaſon of the frailty of our Nature we cannot always ſtand upright: Grant us ſuch Strength and Protection, as may ſupport us in all Dangers, and carry us through all Temptations, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Matth. viii. 24, 25. *Pſal.* xciv. 16, 17.

The EPISTLE.

Rom. xiii. 1-

1. *LET every ſoul be ſubject unto the higher Powers: for there is no Power but of God. The Powers that be are ordained of God.*

2. *Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.*

PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. Let every Chriſtian, of what rank or profeſſion ſoever, know, that nothing in the Goſpel exempts him from Obedience to the Supreme Magiſtrate, and to thoſe that are in Authority under him: but, quite contrary, teaches him to acknowledge their Authority to be derived from God: and conſequently, whoever ſhall reſiſt this Power, reſiſts God the Author and Appointer of it; and muſt expect ſeverely to be puniſhed for ſuch Impiety; if not by courſe of Law, and the Governour ſo diſobeyed; by ſome method which God will find for the revenging ſuch an Affront to his own Ordinance.

1 *Pet.* ii. 13.

3. For the Deſign of all Governments is to reſtrain Vice, and to encourage and ſupport Virtue. So that Men, who behave themſelves orderly and well, have no ill to dread, but very beneficial Conſequences to expect, from the Inſtitution and Exerciſe of it.

3. *For Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame.*

4. For the Magiſtrate is appointed by God for thy Security and Defence: ſo that if thou ſuffer any harm by him, this is (generally) thy own fault; when thou, by breach of Duty, provokeſt him to uſe that Power which God, who hath put Life and Death into his hands, gave him, for the neceſſary Correction and exemplary Puniſhment of wicked and diſorderly People.

4. *For he is the Miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: For he beareth not the Sword in vain, for he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil.*

5. This proves men under an Engagement

5. *Wherefore ye muſt needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but alſo for Conſcience ſake.*

to

to Submiſſion, not purely from a principle of Self-preſervation, to eſcape the Civil Sword; but to avoid Sin and Guilt, in obedience to that God whoſe Commiſſion he hath, and in gratitude for the Benefits that ſuch a Conſtitution procures to them.

6. *For, for this cauſe pay you tribute alſo: for they are God's Miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing.*

6. This is the ground of Governours and their Dignity being ſupported at the Publick Expence. And a very reaſonable one it is, ſince they are the Officers of God, who hath a right to all we have; and make the Protection and Eaſe of their Subjects, who pay it, the whole care and buſineſs of their Lives.

7. *Render therefore unto all their dues; Tribute to whom Tribute is due; Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom; Fear to whom Fear; Honour to whom Honour.*

7. And therefore let it be your care too, to pay them juſtly all thoſe Aids and Impoſitions, all that Subjection, and Reverence, which the Laws of God or Man have given them a right to.

COMMENT.

FRom the ſeveral Duties obliging all Chriſtians, in their Perſonal Capacity, (which are contained in the *Twelfth* of this Epiſtle, and have been ſpoken to at large, upon the Three Sundays next before) S. *Paul* does here proceed to ſuch as are Political, and oblige us, as Members of a Civil Body. A Subject, no leſs neceſſary than the Former, and particularly ſo, at the time of his writing to theſe *Romans*. As will eaſily be made appear, by taking a very ſhort view of the Church's Circumſtances at that Juncture.

It had been, for ſome time, an Opinion too prevalent among the Jews, that They, as the peculiar People of God, could not be bound in Conſcience to obey any foreign Juriſdiction, exerciſed by Heathens and Idolaters; ſuch as the *Romans*, their then Conquerours, were. The greater part of the Perſons, as yet gained over to the Faith of the Goſpel, were ſuch as had been trained up in the *Jewiſh* Perſwaſion. Men, who ſtill retained ſo profound a Veneration for their former Principles, that the Apoſtles found great difficulty in bringing them off clear from ſuch

Notions, inconſiſtent with their new Profeſſion, as the buſineſs of Faith and Worſhip was moſt immediately concerned in. This made the Danger but too manifeſt, that they ſhould likewiſe retain ſuch other Notions, relating to Civil Government, as the Body of Men, they had lately left, entertained and avowed. And though it do not, that I know of, appear from any Hiſtory, that the Chriſtians truly Orthodox gave occaſion for being thought ſo; yet it is very plain, the Perſecutors and Oppoſers of the Goſpel, looking upon Chriſtians as a Spawn of the Jews, were willing to fix the ſame odious Characters upon Them, and pretended at leaſt, as a Colour for their Severity and Malice, conſtantly to think them, Enemies of the State.

It is eaſie to ſee, how ill an influence ſuch an Opinion, if ſuffered, muſt needs have, upon the Religion of Chriſt, and all that ſhould profeſs it. The Benefits of Society and Civil Rights are ſo many, and ſo valuable, and do ſo entirely depend upon good Government and Order, and peaceable Submiſſion to thoſe in publick Stations, that Men will naturally be very jealous of, very averſe to, any Set of People or Principles, that ſhall attempt to break in upon Advantages ſo ſenſible and dear, as theſe may claim to be to all Mankind. The generality even of Subjects, would abhor a Doctrine, that ſhould ſow the Seeds of Diſcord and Confuſion: But it is never to be conceived, how any one Prince or Ruler, ſhould have been reconciled to the Faith, upon the foot it then ſtood; Had it propagated, juſtified, or in any degree countenanced Sedition and Licentiouſneſs, by undertaking to ſet Men free from their Civil Obligations, and diſſolve the Power and Authority, which Governours were otherwiſe allowed to have upon their People, when not Chriſtians. And therefore, in all the ancient Apologies for our Religion, we find the Authors

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particularly careful to wipe off this Calumny, to prove the Goſpel, as it really is, the greateſt Security to all Temporal Juriſdiction, the ſureſt Promoter and beſt Preſerver of publick Order and Quiet, the ſtrongeſt Support of Kings, and the moſt effectual Reſtraint upon Subjects. So that, As few Arguments were urged more frequently, we have ſome reaſon to believe, that few contributed more ſucceſsfully, to recommend this Religion to the general good acceptance of the World, or prepared Men to hearken more favourably to its Preachers; than The manifeſt tendency it had to the Safety and Welfare of Mankind; The particular Inſtructions it gave, The weighty Obligations and Motives it enforced them with, And the unparallell'd Examples it every day produced; for containing all ſorts of Men within the bounds of their proper Station and Duty, for rendring them uſeful and ſerviceable to Society and Government, for a zealous and active Obedience to their Superiours in all lawful inſtances, and for meek and patient Suffering, under even unjuſt Oppreſſions, rather than they would become Inſtruments of diſturbing the Peace of the Publick, or that of their own Conſciences.

The Credit theſe Principles and Practices would bring to Chriſtianity, the Check they would be to the Malice of its Perſecutors, and the Miſchiefs and Obſtructions, which factious and turbulent Spirits muſt needs have derived upon it, may reaſonably be thought a main Motive to St. *Peter*, for inſiſting on this Duty of Obedience to Civil Powers, by any, who attends to the Connexion of his Diſcourſe, in the *Second* of his *Firſt* Epiſtle, from the 12th Verſe and ſo on. There he begins with preſſing ſuch a Behaviour in general, as may ſecure Chriſtians a good eſteem with Heathens, and convince them, that all the ill Reports concerning the Verſe 12.

Men of this Perſwaſion, are utter Calumny and malicious Falſhood. Then, as the beſt Expedient for this Purpoſe, he proceeds upon Submiſſion to Supreme and Subordinate Magiſtrates; enforces this, as a ſingular inſtance of *well-doing*, moſt agreeable to the Will of God, moſt effectual for ſtopping the Mouths, and rectifying the Miſtakes of ſuch, as did not, or would not, truly underſtand the nature and extent of Chriſtian Liberty: And thus he at laſt deſcends to ſpecifie the ſeveral Duties incumbent upon Men, according to the difference of their reſpective Capacities, and mutual Relations to each other.

Verſ. 13. 14. 15.

Verſ. 16, 17, 18, 19, &c.

But St. *Paul*, in the Portion of Scripture now in hand, treats of this matter more at large, and after another manner. He declares the Nature of the Duty enjoined, the Univerſality of its Obligation, the Reaſons upon which that Obligation is founded, the Danger of refuſing to comply with it, the Equity of making it good, the particular Inſtances, wherein it ought to be expreſs'd, and that theſe are not merely a matter of ſecular Convenience or Chriſtian Prudence, but a part of Religion; and ſuch as directly bind the Conſcience. This is the Subſtance of the Doctrine, recommended to our Conſideration at preſent, which I ſhall endeavour to give you a juſt Senſe of, by treating of it, in as plain and practical a method as I am able: Branching out the Sum of what the Apoſtle ſeems to have intended we ſhould collect from his Diſcourſe here, into the following Particulars.

1. *Firſt*. By the *Higher Powers*, it is certain are meant ſuch Authority, and ſuch Perſons veſted with it, as are Civil and Secular. For the *Third* Verſe explains this by *Rulers*, and the *Fourth* by the Character of *bearing the Sword*, being *a revenger to execute wrath*;

wrath; that is, having a right to inflict Temporal Punishments, such as extend even to Death it self, where the Offence provoking them, is Capital. And the *Sixth* and *Seventh* Verse describe them, as Persons to whom *Tribute* and *Custom* are and ought to be paid. All which are Prerogatives peculiar to the Civil, and belong to no other Power; nor to any invested with that, except the Chief Governor. But because this Chief cannot satisfy the ends of Government alone, it is necessary he should call in the Assistance of other Eyes and Hands, and appoint Them to act under him. These, in Their proper Spheres, are his Representatives, and all their Legal Proceedings are His; His virtually, His originally: And consequently, we do not discharge our part to Him, except we pay, to all commissioned under him, a Subjection proportion'd to that extent and degree of Honour, and Authority, which he hath thought fit to derive upon them. This is evident to any, who at all consider the Reason of the thing. But, if it were not, St. *Peter* hath taken care to determine the Case, and prevent all necessity of arguing upon the Point, by commanding in express Terms, that we *Submit to every Ordinance of man, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by Him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well:* and all this, he says, is to be done *for the Lord's sake*. The Meaning whereof we shall best understand, by considering what St. *Paul* hath urged more fully in the Passage at present before us: which is, 1 Pet. ii. 13. 15.

2. *Secondly*, That all Power and Authority whatsoever, is originally in and from God, and communicated by Him to such Persons, and in such Proportions, as He sees requisite for the Order and good Government of this his own World. Accordingly

the Apoſtle does upon this ground raiſe his Argument, for enforcing Subjection *to the Higher Powers*, by putting Men in mind whoſe Sword they bear, and whence their Juriſdiction is derived. For, ſays he, *there is no Power but of God, and the Powers that be are ordained of God.*

Authority and Diſtinction are, in their own Nature, ſo neceſſary to Sociable Creatures, that it does not ſeem poſſible to conceive, how Mankind could have ſubſiſted without them, ſuppoſing the ſtate of Innocence to have continued. But, as God, the univerſal Cauſe, hath, in virtue of his being ſo, an indiſputable Dominion over all that proceed from Him; ſo we may reaſonably infer ſome Right of Government, inſeparable from the Relation and Character of a Parent, as made by God the next and ſubordinate Cauſe of the Children, who deſcend from Him. And ſuch a Superiority in Private Families is ſo far from the Effect of Sin, or any Puniſhment of it, that we have a Pattern of it, even in the Perſons of the Bleſſed Trinity themſelves. But indeed, when we extend our Thoughts to Perſons, whom theſe Engagements of Blood and Deſcent cannot reach, the Caſe is altered. For then, how fondly ſoever ſome People may talk or think, of a Dominion, or a Slavery, founded in Nature; it ſhould be very hard, methinks, to convince Men, upon Principles of Reaſon, that as to their Politick Capacities, they are not by Nature free; and harder yet to advance ſuch Notions among Chriſtians, who are taught by Revelation, where to lay this whole Matter: Who He is, that makes one Man to differ from, to be higher and better than another: and, that Every one in his own Caſe may to any ſort of Superior, whether by Nature or by poſitive Inſtitution, alledge thoſe words of our Saviour to *Pilate*, *Thou couldſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above.*

For hence it follows undeniably, that no Governour, or Parent, of what kind soever, can either have any Power originally inherent in himself, or that he can draw it from any other Source. And God, as he is a God of Decency and Order, and not of Anarchy and Confusion; so hath he taken all due care for the placing Men in higher and lower Stations, in such Distances from, and such Influences over each other, as may best conduce to their mutual Safety and Quiet. And although these Præeminences are what some are born to, yet still their Title is from above. For the Laws of Nature, and of Nations, the Civil Constitutions of each Countrey, and the voluntary Compacts of particular Persons, are but so many Sanctions of Almighty God. They are inspired, or confirmed, or allowed by Him. Government is indeed called the *Ordinance of Man*, in regard it is exercised by, and contrived for the Benefit of, and limited or directed by the Laws of, Men. But still the Right, which Government conveys, is God's; and the different Forms of Government are but so many different Methods, of adjusting the Measures, and transferring the Administration of it, to particular Uses and Persons. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

This then shews us the true state of all Temporal Jurisdiction, that it is not, cannot be Universal and Absolute; but must be limited, and depending, and subordinate only. For which reason it is, that the Scripture, when directing the Duties of the several Relations of Superiours to Inferiours, constantly remembers to mention their proper Characters, so as to add withall an Advertisement, to whom they stand accountable, for the Administration and regular Discharge of them. The Civil Parent, is for this reason stiled *The Minister of God* to Men *for their Good*. The Natural advised, that it is a Duty incumbent upon Him, to *bring up* his Chil- Verse. 4. Ephes. vi. 4.

Children *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:* and that this Authority over his own Fleſh, is entruſted with him for this very purpoſe. The Maſters are commanded to treat their Servants with Juſtice, and Equity, and great Moderation; as conſidering, that They *have alſo a Maſter in Heaven.* So that the Poſt aſſigned to every one of theſe is, upon the Matter, much the ſame with That of the *Centurion* in the Goſpel; who deſcribes himſelf to be a *Man under Authority, having at the ſame time Souldiers under Him*; and ſo owing and paying a like Obedience to his Superior Officer; which he, by virtue of his Commiſſion, required from others of a lower Rank. An Obedience, to which They could not be engaged, nor He make demand of, but only ſo far forth, as he had been empowered by the Giver of his Commiſſion: An Obedience due to him in quality of a *Centurion*, as an Officer ſet over private Souldiers; ſet ſo by One, who had Power of Him and Them: whoſe higher Elevation gave Him the ſame Right to command the *Centurions*, that They had to command any Common Centinel: Or rather, to ſpeak more ſtrictly and properly, One who alone could, alone did, command Both; Only with this difference, that the Officer was commanded more immediately by the Prince or General himſelf, as Kings are by Almighty God; the Souldiers by a Deputy, as the People by the Means and Mediation of their Princes: But ſtill, principally and ultimately by God, whoſe Vicegerents Princes are, as the Magiſtrates commiſſioned by Them, are Theirs.

Col. iv. 1.

Matth. viii. 9.

3. From hence we ſhall be able to ſatisfy our ſelves, in the *Third* place, how the Performance of our Duty to the Civil Magiſtrate becomes an Act of Religion. The true Cauſe is, that God hath enjoyned it, who alone hath Power over the Conſciences of Men; and therefore our Obedience in this reſpect

reſpect can be due primarily and properly to none but Him, and to Others purely upon His account. It is the Father and Ruler of Spirits alone, that can lay obligations upon the Souls of Men. So ſays St. *James* expreſly, *There is one Law-giver,* Jam. iv. 12. that is, One excluſive to all others, *who is able to ſave and to deſtroy:* For, ſince that Authority is manifeſtly defective, which only preſcribes Rules for Obedience, but cannot enforce thoſe Rules, by executing and inflicting Puniſhments on the Diſobedient, and beſtowing Rewards and Encouragements for Fidelity and Submiſſion; the Apoſtle wiſely added his Reaſon, in thoſe laſt words, *Who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* And the Argument in effect ſtands thus; No Power but God's can puniſh or reward the Souls of Men, therefore no Authority but God's can bind the Souls of Men. Which indeed we find to have been our Saviour's own Argument too, when preparing his Diſciples for Sufferings and Perſecutions: *I will forwarn you whom ye ſhall fear:* Luke xii. 4, 5. *Fear not them which kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear Him, which after He hath killed, hath power to caſt into Hell.*

Men may *be ſubject for wrath,* (as St. *Paul* expreſſeth it,) that is, upon prudent and politick Conſiderations, to preſerve their Liberties, Eſtates, and Lives; and for avoiding thoſe temporal Inconveniences, which They, who have long Verſ. 5. Hands and long Swords, might otherwiſe bring upon them. But no other Reaſon can render it neceſſary to *be ſubject for Conſcience ſake,* and upon a Principle of Duty, except this ſingle one premiſed by the Apoſtle here, as the ground of that Neceſſity; that our Governours are the *Miniſters of God,* that He intruſted and inveſted Verſ. 4. them, that the Authority they exerciſe is His, that His Honour is concerned to take Vengeance on them

who,

who ſhall preſume to inſult it, that the
Verſ. 2. *Deſpiſers of Them do deſpiſe Him that ſent them*; and therefore *they that reſiſt*, becauſe in reſiſting the Power, they reſiſt *the Ordinance of God, do receive to themſelves damnation.*

And, when in like manner the ſame Apoſtle com-
Epheſ. vi. 6. mands Servants to *do the will of God from the heart, not with Eye-ſervice as Men-pleaſers, but as thoſe that ſerve the Lord Chriſt:* When he preſſes the Honour and Obſervance due from Chil-
Verſ. 1. dren, becauſe *this is right and pleaſing to the Lord*; Are not theſe plain Intimations, that the foundation of all Power is one and the ſame, that every Obligation to Superiours is a knot of God's tying, and that the Bonds of Nature, as well as thoſe of Civil Society, voluntary Contract, or perſonal Conſent, are the Works of His Hands, and receive the whole of their ſtrength, and binding virtue from being ſo?

4. *Fourthly*, This lets us in to a juſt and true Notion of that Duty required on Our parts, ſtiled by St. *Peter ſubmitting our ſelves to every Ordinance of Man*; and by St. *Paul* here, *being ſubject unto the higher Powers:* Expreſſions both of them cautious and prudent; and ſuch, as both ſuppoſe a poſſibility of ſome Injunctions, which we may not actually obey, and direct our Behaviour in ſuch caſes of difficulty.

For if all Power be God's, and whatever portion of it any Mortal enjoys, be derived from, and held under Him; If no Capacity in the World, though never ſo high, never ſo ſacred, can be any thing more than a Deputation from Heaven; If the Conſciences of Men be the peculiar Dominion of the Father of Spirits, a Juriſdiction incommunicable, which no Man may, no Man can invade; It neceſſarily follows, that Governours of every kind, are bound to impoſe ſuch Commands only, as are agreeable to the Will of Their

and Our Common Father, and Maſter, and Lord: That they may not abuſe their Power to the prejudice of Him whoſe it is; and who committed it to them, in the quality of a Truſt, for which they are highly accountable. But if they do, that then thoſe, who are under their Direction, muſt look to their firſt and higheſt Engagement; and no pretence of complying with the Orders of their immediate Superiours, will bear them out, in Actions manifeſtly diſpleaſing to their Great General Governour. That, not only no poſitive Evil muſt be committed, but no neceſſary Duty muſt be left undone, for any Humane reſpects whatſoever. That *Daniel* was no leſs concern'd, not to neglect God, by omitting his conſtant Addreſſes to Him, than the *Three Children* not to deny God, by committing Idolatry againſt him. That all things elſe muſt give way in ſuch Caſes, and, of what importance ſoever other Obſervances may ſeem, ſtill Religion is the firſt and main Point. This muſt be guarded, at the hazard of all other Intereſts, and Expectances; Which, though never ſo juſt, while conſiſtent with our Duty towards God; yet they loſe all their weight and value, and the purſuits of them, inſtead of Duties or Engagements, do forthwith commence Crimes, and ſnares to our Conſciences, without it.

Yet, even where actual Obedience is unlawful, Subjection will continue neceſſary. For this the Scripture gives us many expreſs Precepts, and not only the Hiſtory contained there, but that of all Chriſtian Antiquity, furniſh great numbers of Examples. Men, who have immortaliz'd the Honour of their own Memory, and the Chriſtian Cauſe, by *enduring grief for Conſcience towards God, ſuffering wrongfully.* The very remembrance what theſe Powers were, at the time when this and St. *Peter*'s Epiſtle were written, is a forcible Argument; and, if to a *Nero* ſuch Deference were required, proves, 1 Pet. ii. 19.

that

that Tyrannical Abuſe of Power, cruel and unjuſt Perſecution, and Difference in Religion, are not alone ſufficient, to abſolve Subjects from their Allegiance, and render Violence and Reſiſtance lawful.

But it muſt be confeſs'd withal, that, between the Caſe of Chriſtians then and now, there is one very material Difference. For, ſince the Secular Powers are come into the Church, Religion hath the Countenance and Support of the Laws, and is become a part, the moſt valuable part, of Mens Property. Again, the Forms and Limitations of Government, even in Nations all agreeing in the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, are very different. So that, though the ſame Religion be common to all, yet are not the Strength and Security of it ſo, with regard to its Civil Eſtabliſhment: And theſe are matters, with which the Goſpel meddles not. It does not undertake to model Kingdoms and Commonwealths, by any fixed Standard; but leaves every People ſo far to their own meaſures, to conſult their own Safety and Convenience, by ſuch Laws and Conditions, as are moſt wholſome, and beſt promote the Publick Good. In ſhort, it does not teach how to Eſtabliſh, but how to Obey; is a Guard for, but not a Preſcription to, any Government; and enjoyns Subjection to *the Powers that are*, without determining what ſorts of Powers ſhall be.

From hence I take it to be evident, that the Meaſures of a Subject's Duty muſt needs vary, according to the difference of Power lodged in their Governours: That theſe are regulated and ſet out, by the Temper of that Conſtitution, under which Men live. That, when Men cannot obey, yet neither can they be truly ſaid not *to be ſubject*, when defending their Perſons or Eſtates from Suffering or Oppreſſion, by all thoſe Methods, which the Laws of their Country, no way repugnant to the Laws of God, have put into

into their hands. But, when no Legal Remedy can be had, then is the proper Seaſon of the Subjection I now ſpeak of, not only to *the good and gentle, but alſo to the froward* and exorbitant; then they muſt *commit their Cauſe to God who judgeth righteouſly*, reſt in the Comforts of a good Conſcience, not doubt a reward of what they endure *for his ſake*; and with all poſſible Meekneſs, Modeſty, and good Manners, reſpectful Language, and inoffenſive Behaviour, expreſs their Reverence of the Character and Perſons, even of wicked Governours. Remembring, that the *Power is ſtill from God*, though the abuſe of it (permitted frequently as a Scourge for the Sins of a wicked People) be the Suggeſtion and Work of the Devil.

5. *Fifthly.* In regard this of contradicting the Law and Will of God, is the only reſerved Caſe, which can juſtifie our Diſobedience to the Commands of our Governours; it muſt needs concern every Man very highly, to have his Conſcience rightly informed, about the nature of thoſe things, that make the matter of the Laws impoſed on him. To alledge, that the Things are in themſelves Indifferent, can never be a good Argument for declining our Obedience. For by Indifferent are only meant, ſuch as might be either done or let alone, done thus or otherwiſe, were it not, that the Law of Man hath interpoſed, by limiting or preſcribing that, which all antecedent Obligations had left free to our own Choice and Diſcretion. And, if our Rulers have no power in Theſe matters, they have not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, power in Any. For, whatſoever the Light of Reaſon and Scripture binds us to, is of perpetual Obligation, Neceſſary and Good without any Humane Law, and not impoſed by any ſuch, ſo much as ſtrengthned by a freſh Approbation, enjoined under new Penalties, and additional Sanctions. Again, Whatſoever Reaſon or Scripture declares evil and ſinful, no Allowance,

ance, no Command of Man, can either make it begin, or ceaſe to be ſo. The proper Sphere of the Civil Power does therefore lie between theſe two Extremes. A Middle ſort, neither good nor evil, neceſſary or unlawful, before the Law; and afterwards neceſſary, only becauſe commanded; unlawful, only becauſe forbidden: For, though the thing it ſelf, abſtracting from the Command, be, yet Obedience to any Command not ſinful never was, never can be, a matter of Indifference.

Nor is the force of this Obligation weakned, when things of this ſort are enjoyned in matters of Religion. Becauſe the difference of the Object, about which they are employed, does not make any difference in the Nature of the Things themſelves. And therefore, to require, that we ſhew where God hath commanded theſe things, is an unreaſonable Demand; becauſe, to juſtifie the Magiſtrate's Authority, it ought to ſuffice, that they are no where forbidden. Religion indeed is God's peculiar, and all that is eſſential to it muſt come from Him: But, for the Circumſtances, which regard only the Exerciſe and Beauty of it, theſe God hath left to be ordered, as may beſt conduce to Decency and Convenience. Theſe may vary in ſeveral places at one and the ſame time, or in the ſame place at different times: Which ſhews, how far diſtant they are from Inſtitutions ſtrictly divine; that they are ſtill of an indifferent Temper, enjoined, altered, removed at pleaſure, and as Prudence ſhall direct. So that they come within the Verge of the Magiſtrate, by the ſame reaſon that all other Indifferent things do: and, even when enforced by a Law, are not thereby intended to be thought binding for their own ſakes; but only on the account of thoſe general Rules, which call for our Obedience to theſe, as well as any other, Ordinances of our Governours, *for the Lord's ſake.*

Nor

Nor will that Apology of a ſcrupulous Conſcience, ſo common with weak People, avail much in this Caſe. For a Scruple implies want of Evidence, clear enough to determine the Mind, to either ſide of the Queſtion. And, in a ſtate of ſo much uncertainty, 'tis certainly ſafer to take that ſide of the particular Matter in diſpute, which is ſupported by a plain Command of Obedience in general, and tends to preſerve Unity, and Peace, and Order, and Reverence for Authority; than to be carried aſide by the the unſettledneſs of our own Mind, endanger our Souls by the guilt of refuſing an Obedience, which we only doubt may be unlawful, and by our Example to ſcandalize our Brethren, foment Diviſions and Diſorder, in Church or State, and bring our Superiours and the Laws into Contempt.

6. I obſerve from hence, *Sixthly*, the Extent of this Obligation, that it is Univerſal, *Let every Soul be ſubject*. Which plainly ſhews, That no Quality or Order of Men can poſſibly be exempted from it. That our Bleſſed Lord condeſcended to theſe Submiſſions, is manifeſt, from his paying Tribute, from his Diſcourſes with *Pilate*, from the Meekneſs wherewith he ſuffered, from his Rebuke to *Peter* in the Garden, and from the whole courſe of his Deportment, throughout the laſt Tragical Scene of his Life. That the Apoſtles never permitted their Courage and Zeal to tranſport them to any degree of Inſolence, or Oppoſition to the Civil Powers, appears from their patient and quiet enduring Impriſonments, Scourgings, and all manner of Cruelty and Injuſtice, inflicted for diſcharging the Duties of their Poſt, with which, they declared, no Humane Authority could diſpenſe. That the Primitive Chriſtians eſteem'd it their Duty, and their Glory, to reverence the Ordinance of God, even in Heathen Emperours, to ſacrifice their Lives in the Service of a perſecuting State, and without reſiſtance

to be moſt injuriouſly, and barbarouſly treated by their Governours, all the Apologies of the Antients teſtify; and, that the coming in of the World to the Church, did not abridge the Right of Chriſtian Princes, or procure an Immunity to any of their Subjects, we need no other Evidence, than that of a moſt Holy Prelate, and moſt renowned Expoſitor, who, after that acceſſion, hath upon this very Paſſage delivered his Senſe to this effect: *To ſhew that theſe Commands extend to all Men, to Prieſts and Monks, and not to the Laity, or Men of Secular Employments only, he begins with theſe words, Let every Soul be ſubject unto the Higher Powers; Though thou be an Apoſtle, or an Evangeliſt, or a Prophet, or of whatſoever Character elſe thou art: For this ſubjection does not take off from the Dignity of thy Religious Capacity.* So little did thoſe better Ages form any Imagination of ſetting up Two Supreme Lords; the One in Spirituals, and the Other in Temporals; ſo much leſs of the Temporal Juriſdiction of any Biſhop, Paramount to all Powers, in order to Spirituals: So far were the then Clergy from withdrawing their Allegiance, in claiming an Independence upon the Civil Governour: So ignorant of any Privilege which their Function brought, other than that of outſhining their Flocks, as in others, ſo in theſe (than which none are more truly Chriſtian) Virtues, of a moſt inviolable Loyalty, affectionate Obedience, and profoundeſt Reverence to the Princes ſet over them by God.

Chryſoſt.

7. *Laſtly*, The Paſſage now under conſideration, repreſents to us the Equity of this Subjection, from the Benefits which Government brings, and ſecures to Mankind. To this in general it is, that we owe the Support and Countenance of Virtue, the Chaſtiſement and Suppreſſion of Vice, the Preſervation of our juſt Rights, the Eſtabliſhment and Security of Property and Order; which thoſe, who, for pri-

tate

vate Ends, are forward to disturb and invade, would be an overmatch for the Peaceable and Conscientious, were they not restrained by the fears of present Punishments, and terrified by necessary Examples of Justice upon Evil-doers. And, if it happen, as sometimes it will, that, in the Exercise of such Power, hardships should fall upon particular Persons, yet for the bearing such with Patience, it is a proper Argument to submit, that the very Abuse of Power is not attended, with Consequences in any degree so destructive, so mischievous and dreadful, as the Subversion and total Dissolution of that Power. For this unhinges the whole Frame at once, and diffuses the Calamity it pretends to redress. Our Governours, though next in Elevation to God, do not cease to be Men; They continue still liable to Passions and Resentments, like those of common Men; and to Mistakes and crafty Insinuations, as much more than common Men, as their Sphere of Business is larger, and reduces them to a greater necessity of seeing and hearing with other Eyes and Ears. All which should prevail for greater allowances, and more candid Constructions of their Management to be made, by those, who do not discern the Difficulties they are under; and judge unreasonably, by the narrow view of One small part, what Methods are practicable and proper for the Good of the whole Body.

In short, The Publick is their constant Care; to this they sacrifice their Time, their Ease, their Thoughts: and therefore the Supporting their Dignity ought to be a Publick Expence. He that defrauds Them, does in truth wrong himself; and the Head can no more suffer alone, in the Political, than it can in the Natural Body. So that even Interest, and Self-love, and Ingenuity, and Gratitude, do all conspire to perswade Fidelity and Subjection: and

God in this, as in other Religious Duties, hath only enjoyned us to do that in Obedience to Him, which, were it not commanded, is moſt beneficial to our ſelves.

For I cannot but aſſure my ſelf, that, were St. *Paul*'s Doctrine here, and theſe Obſervations upon it duly attended to, they would be an excellent Rule of Behaviour, and of infinite Importance to the welfare of all the World, both for this, and the next Life. They would prevent all ſinful Compliances on the one hand, and all peeviſh Obſtinacies on the other: would effectually diſpoſe us to revere all juſt Authority, and conform to every innocent Ordinance of our Superiours; and render us bold as Lions, in refuſing whatever tends to the Diſhonour of God, and the defiling our own Conſciences.

They would likewiſe teach Governours Equity and Moderation, Piety and Prudence; would inſpire a moſt affectionate Tenderneſs for the Safety and Quiet of the Souls under their Charge, and the ſtricteſt Circumſpection, not to exceed the Bounds and Intent of their Commiſſion: Conſtant Endeavours, that all their Injunctions be profitable and Good, promoting Edification and Godlineſs; not arbitrary, and rigorous, and enſnaring. In ſhort, Theſe Reflections would make them Fathers of their People indeed, and Children of the Moſt High, in the beſt and nobleſt Senſe: Ornaments and Honours to the Authority they bear, and Images ſo lively of Him, who truſts it to them; So benign, ſo beneficial, that their Subjects would then ſay of Them, what they of *Lycaonia* ſaid of the Apoſtles; *The Gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of Men.*

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

Matth. viii. 23.

PARAPHRASE.

23. *AND when he was entred into the ſhip, his diſciples followed him.*

23. Jeſus (after having done *Mark* iv. 35.

the Miracles before related in *Capernaum)* was diſpoſed, towards the Evening, to go into the Countrey that lyes on another part of the Lake of *Geneſareth:* And finding ſome Veſſels lye ready for his purpoſe, He and his Diſciples went on board *Verſ.* 36. one of them: the reſt of the Ships bearing him company in the Voyage.

24. *And behold there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea: inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves; but he was aſleep.*

24. Preſently after they lanched *Mark* iv. 37, 38. *Luke* viii. 23.

out, (as he was aſleep, upon a pillow, in the hinder part of the Ship) a Storm aroſe ſo violent, that the Ship took in a great quantity of water, and was like to be caſt away.

25. *And his diſciples came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Lord, ſave us, we periſh.*

26. *And he ſaith nnto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe, and rebuked the wind and the ſea, and there was a great calm.*

25. 26. Hereupon his Diſciples ran to him, and awoke him in terms of the utmoſt conſternation, and diſtruſt. Which he reproved them for; and

then ſaid to the Wind and the Water, Peace, be ſtill. This powerful Word was immediately obeyed: for the Wind ceaſed, and the Sea was ſmooth, as ſoon as he had ſpoken it.

27. *But the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſeas obey him?*

27. Which ſudden change, and the cauſe of it, when they of his own and the other

Ship's company underſtood, they were aſtoniſhed at his Power, and concluded, that he muſt needs be a very extraordinary Perſon, who by this Miracle plainly made it appear, that the Winds and the Seas were abſolutely at his own diſpoſal.

28. *And when he was come unto the other ſide into the countrey of the Gergaſenes, there met him two poſſeſſed with Devils, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way.*

28. Upon his landing in the *Gergaſenes* *Mark* v. *Luke* viii. 26,7. ἐις τὴν πόλεως.

Country, in that part adjacent to *Gadara*, two Men poſſeſſed with Devils met him, (One of them having an unclean Spirit, and himſelf a *Gadarene*, ſo very fierce, that no Chains or Fetters could bind him, but he was night and day naked among the Tombs, crying and

cutting himſelf with Stones) this Man, or the Spirit in him, upon Jeſus demanding his Name, ſaid it was *Legion*, becauſe many Devils had entred into him.

Comp. Mark v. *Luke* viii.

29. Theſe men met Jeſus, and the Spirits (in that fierce one) deſired him not to puniſh them before their time, (nor to ſend them out of that Countrey, or into the Deep.)

29. *And they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt high God; Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

30. 31. But (ſince they had been commanded to come out of the Man) to permit them to enter into a herd of ſwine, which (to the number of two thouſand) were feeding at ſome diſtance (in the Mountains near the Sea.)

30. *And there was a good way off from them an herd of many ſwine feeding.*

31. *So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go into the ſwine.*

32. Jeſus, having ſhewed his Mercy in a miraculous reſtraint of their Power over Men, ſuffered them to uſe it upon the Swine; (by which the force, the poſſeſſion, and the number of theſe Devils, and conſequently his Power over them was rendred more unqueſtionable; and the Owners of thoſe Creatures puniſhed, for the contempt of the Jewiſh Law) whereupon the whole herd ſtreight ran down a precipice, and were choaked in the Water.

32. *And he ſaid unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they entred into the herd of ſwine; and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters.*

33. The Keepers hereupon made haſte, to give notice of this whole matter in all neighbouring places.

33. *And they that kept them, fled, and went their way into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the poſſeſs'd of the Devils.*

34. This news brought a vaſt concourſe of People together, (who found the late fierce poſſeſs'd Man, ſitting clothed, and in his perfect ſenſes, at Jeſus feet, and were fully informed by thoſe that had been Eye-witneſſes of the whole Tranſaction, how ſo ſudden and wonderful a change had been wrought) and (partly from a dread of his Power, partly from grief for the loſs they had ſuſtained by the Swine) they entreated Jeſus, not to make any longer ſtay among them.

Luke viii. 35, 36, 27.

34. *And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus; and when they ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.*

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

IN treating of this Day's Goſpel, I muſt again content my ſelf, with ſpeaking to the Former only of Two Miracles, which it offers to our Conſideration, That of our Bleſſed Maſter's proving his Authority, not over the Minds of Men only, but over Subjects in appearance much leſs likely to be at its diſpoſal; The Winds and the Seas. Of which we have here a very amazing and particular Account, from the 23d to the 27th Verſe of the Chapter incluſively. Mark iv. 35.

An Account capable of very good Improvement, from theſe Three Things (if diligently obſerved) in it.

I. *Firſt.* The Danger here deſcribed.

II. *Secondly.* The Behaviour of our Lord's Diſciples under it: and,

III. *Thirdly.* The Deliverance from it.

1. *Firſt.* In order to a juſt Apprehenſion of the Danger, the following Circumſtances ſhould be attended to. That, preſently upon their lanching forth, there aroſe a *Tempeſt in the Sea*, and this ſo furious, that *the Ship was even covered with the Waves:* That all this happened, notwithſtanding Chriſt himſelf was preſent; and that, as a farther Aggravation of their Terrour and Danger, *he was aſleep too*, when it thus threatned their immediate deſtruction.

Now, from theſe ſeveral Circumſtances laid together, I have a fair occaſion for making ſome Reflections upon the Providence of Almighty God, with regard to the Difficulties and Afflictions, in which Good men in general ſo often find themſelves involved. For thoſe Diſciples may be very reaſonably look'd upon, as at that time the Church Repreſentative; and the Hazard They were in, as a figure of

thoſe Extremities, to which any of Chriſt's faithful Followers ſhall, in any after Ages, be reduced. The reaſonableneſs whereof I muſt now conſider, not in its utmoſt latitude; but ſo far only, as the caſe in hand ſuggeſts matter for it.

1. *Firſt* then. I take it from hence to be very evident, that no Man, though never ſo holy, never ſo acceptable and dear to God, hath reaſon to promiſe himſelf uninterrupted Peace or Proſperity; Or that even thoſe Actions of his Life, which beſt expreſs a ſteady and zealous regard to his Duty, ſhall be a Security from Trouble and Hazard. Could a dependence like This be juſtified in any Man, our Lord's conſtant Companions ſeem to have had the faireſt Title to it; And yet, if, from the ſeveral Relations of this Miracle we may be allowed to form Conjectures, Though other Veſſels were engaged in the ſame Voyage, yet does the Storm ſeem to have born more hard upon none, than that, in which a God incarnate and his Diſciples were embarked. Thus his Divine Wiſdom ſaw fit to permit it then, and thus he often does now. And, to take off all vain Imaginations, of Good men being perfectly exempted from Dangers and Calamities, he did, in much Humility, condeſcend to be himſelf toſt and driven about, by the force and fury of that Tempeſt; That ſo, in all the ſtormy Cares and raging Billows of a fickle and boiſterous World, the Beſt of his Diſciples might apply to their own Circumſtances, the Warning elſewhere left to the firſt Planters of the Chriſtian Faith:

John xv. 20. *The Servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you.*

Chriſt promiſes, 'tis true, to be with his Church

Mat. xxviii. 20. *always, even to the end of the world.* And he is actually and properly preſent with every faithful Chriſtian, in every innocent and virtu-

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ous Action; He is yet in a more peculiar manner ſo, in the diſcharge of thoſe Duties, which have a more eminent and immediate tendency, to the Advancement of Religion and his own Glory. Not preſent now indeed, as when converſing in the days of his Fleſh upon Earth; yet ſo, as miniſters an equal aſſurance of his Readineſs and Power to help and to protect us. But ſtill Experience proves, that both the Church in general, and good People in particular, have laboured under ſore Tryals, and ſuffered many hard things; Not only on the account of private Faults or Failings, where ſome offence might be given; Nor merely in matters of indifferent temper, where perverſe minds are apt to take offence, even when none was given; But in their beſt and moſt praiſe-worthy Actions; nay, not only in them, but for them too. Their very Virtues have been ſo far from a Defence, as to expoſe and render them a Prey. And Matters have often come to ſuch extremity, that *in the noiſe of the Waves, and the overflowings of Ungodlineſs,* Mens Perſons and their Fortunes have been ſwallowed up in the Storm, for no other reaſon, but their conſtant refuſal to *make Shipwrack of Faith and of a good Conſcience.*

For all this we can eaſily account; ſo far as the Malice of the Devil, and the Inſtruments of it, wicked Men, are concern'd. It is but natural to ſuppoſe, that theſe ſhould unite, and bend their utmoſt endeavours, againſt Perſons of Integrity and Piety. But, in regard there is a God, who ſees and over-rules all things, a God, who hath declared Himſelf and his Honour intereſſed in the Cauſe of righteous and excellent Men; How comes it to paſs, that He does not eſpouſe ſuch more viſibly, and interpoſe more powerfully, that he does not controul and defeat their Enemies, and make them know, to their coſt, that all their Spight is impotent, and their Devices vain?

And

And yet this is not done: the Oppreſſions and Inſults of baſe and barbarous Wretches are often not prevented: And the Good are not only aſſaulted from that Quarter, but ſometimes from Sorrows and Dangers, that ſpeak a more immediate hand of God. Such was the Tempeſt in the Text; Such are many Troubles and Diſaſters in Humane Life; And, as in That Chriſt was aſleep, ſo in Theſe, God ſeems to take little or no notice of his Suffering Servants. For the reconciling all ~~w~~hich with a Juſt and Holy, a Wiſe and Watchful Providence, I beg it may be conſidered in the

II. *Second* Place; That, though the Beſt Men, and the Beſt Actions, are not ſecured from Sufferings and Dangers, yet are thoſe Sufferings and Dangers always directed to the Good of the Parties concerned; and ordained by Providence, for wiſe Reaſons and excellent Purpoſes. Of Theſe many may be unknown to Us; and of Thoſe that are or may be known, Some are without the compaſs of my preſent Deſign. For This reaches no farther, than to our Adverſities, in proportion to the Caſe of the Diſciples here: and conſequently, to ſuch Reaſons and Ends alone, as ſute with thoſe, whereby we may reaſonably gather our Bleſſed Lord induced, to ſuffer the Coming of this Diſtreſs upon Them.

1. One of theſe Reaſons ſeems to have been the Bringing them to a modeſt and humble Opinion of themſelves. Mention is frequently made of their failing in this point, and how exceeding forward they were, in giving to themſelves the Preference, not only above the reſt of the World, but alſo before one another. Now the Honour of retaining to, and an intimate Friendſhip and Acquaintance with their divine Maſter, the partaking in his Privacies, and being there let into the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; were Privileges exceeding valuable

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in themſelves, likely to draw upon them the Reſpects of Others, and not leſs ſo, to beget in Themſelves pleaſing Imaginations of ſomewhat more than ordinary, that ſhould diſpoſe our Lord thus to diſtinguiſh, and as it were cull them out, from the reſt of Mankind. Now, what more proper to refute theſe Notions, and prevent their miſchievous Conſequences, than putting thoſe ſuppoſed Excellencies to the Touch, and convincing them, by ſuch an Experiment, how little they were removed above common Men, how far from anſwering the glorious Ideas, which they had formed of their mighty proficiency, and yet untried Virtue?

Thus we have reaſon to believe Good men in general dealt with, whoſe Proſperity is but too prone to turn God's Bleſſings into Poyſon, and taint the Virtue they have, with fond and lofty Conceits of their own Merit. And it is, no doubt, an Inſtance of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Providence, to ſhew ſuch to themſelves: To inſtruct them by Sufferings and Dangers, and ſeemingly to neglect and forſake them for a while, that they may feel their own Weakneſs, when the Enemy attacks them; and, by ſo ſenſible a proof conclude, that, how great ſoever they may repreſent themſelves to themſelves, and whatever imaginary Fights and Triumphs they may act over in their own Fancies, yet in truth that *Strength*, which *faints in the day of Adverſity, is* but, can be but *ſmall*; and that, which reſiſts and conquers in ſuch a day, is not their own, but His, whoſe Grace enables them to ſtand, and gets it ſelf Glory of their Infirmities and Temptations. Which leads me to

2. A ſecond Reaſon for Chriſt's permitting this Difficulty upon his Diſciples, even that they might hereby attain to juſt Apprehenſions of his Power and Goodneſs, and higher degrees of Faith and Truſt in Him.

Him. No Body need be told, how quick a Senſe we have, where our own Perſons or Intereſts are touched, and what deep Impreſſions thoſe Dangers and Deliverances make, which, when our Brethren only are concerned, are entertained but coldly. Thus the preſent Terrour and Diſtreſs would not fail to affect the Diſciples more tenderly, and to have a more vigorous and laſting Influence, than their ſeeing our Lord cleanſe the Lepers, enlighten the Blind, heal the Sick at a diſtance, raiſe the Dead with a Word, or any the moſt amazing Inſtances upon others, of which they were only Spectators.

And ſo we may ſay in general, that Afflictions are of uſe even to Good men, for refreſhing their Memories, rouzing their Thoughts, and ſettling their Affiance in the Almighty. For, though ſuch Perſons apply themſelves more than Common Men do, to weigh the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Providence, and make ſome Profit of whatever is remarkable in the Fortunes of Others; Yet even thus Good men will ſtill be Men; and while they are ſo, they will not be able to conſider ſuch Events, with equal warmth and affection, as when the like ſhall happen to themſelves.

And, as this Expedient is of Advantage to us, from the difference of Concern for other People, in compariſon of our Selves; ſo is it likewiſe, with regard to each Man's private Affairs, conſidered ſingly and apart. For it is very viſible, that nothing, which does not make ſome great Change in Our Affairs, affects us ſtrongly, or ſticks long by us. The ſame good Providence contrives our Preſervation from, and our Eſcapes out of Danger. But notwithſtanding nothing is more evident, than that conſtant Health and Safety do by no means move our Spirits, and awaken our Senſe and Praiſe of the Divine Goodneſs, like a Recovery from Sickneſs juſt deſpaired of, or a Reſcue from ſome common and imminent Ruin.

They

They who judge rightly, will diſcern the hand of God in both: But Few attend to this in ordinary Caſes; and They, who do carry their Thoughts ſo far, feel their Paſſions more powerfully wrought upon to acknowledge and be thankful for it, in the One than the Other. So that *it is good* for us, even in this reſpect, to be ſometimes *in trouble*; for, did we not feel Smart and Danger, we ſhould never know the Pleaſure of Eaſe and Deliverance. And it may be ſaid with great truth, that much of the Sweets of Life would be loſt, were there no mixture of Bitter and Diſtaſteful, to heighten their Reliſh, and recommend them to us.

3. *Thirdly.* The Providence of God might intend, by the Danger in my Text, as it certainly does, by the Tryals of other Good People, to exerciſe theſe Diſciples, and train them up to Conſtancy and Perfection in Virtue. Theſe were the Perſons, upon whom the weight of eſtabliſhing the Goſpel was to lie. This they were to effect, in deſpight of Indignities and Reproaches, Malice and unrelenting Barbarity, Oppoſitions on every ſide, and Perſecutions in every place. Fit then it was, to inure theſe Champions betimes to ſhew them Death in its moſt frightful Form; and at the ſame time make them ſenſible, that he who could quiet the Rage of the Seas, could not want power to ſubdue the *Madneſs of the People.*

Every Good man, it muſt be allowed, is not deſigned for ſuch vaſt and hazardous Undertakings; but every Man hath a Poſt appointed him by God, and the Character of a Chriſtian to maintain. And Few arrive to any uncommon Excellencies in this Station, except Such, as make their way up to them through Sufferings. Hence 'tis, we commonly call Afflictions *Tryals*, becauſe they are the Teſt of a Man's Virtue, and diſcover what he really is: The

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very proof, which the Devil desired to bring *Job*'s Integrity to. They have effects, in some measure like high Winds and Thunder in the Air; or like the Fermentation of Humours in Bodies: for, as Health and Wholsomness could not be preserved without These, so is the Soul confirmed by some Returns of violent Agitation, that awaken and exert its Powers in Sufferings and Difficulties. And what degree of these is necessary, the great Physician of Souls best knows; and therefore our care must be to submit to his Prescriptions. Thus much, however, we may see plainly; that, the more familiar these things are made to us, the more will that Terror and Surprise wear off, which disables our first Encounters, from all that Steadiness and Decency that becomes us. And how subject to such Consternations very Good men are, may be gathered from my *Second* General Head.

II. The Behaviour of these Disciples under their present Danger. The 25th Verse tells us, *they came to Jesus and awoke him:* and herein, no doubt, they are our Examples. They teach us, whither to flee in the Necessity of our Affairs, and the Anguish of our Souls; that Christ is a sure Refuge, our only Support, when humane Remedies fail; and *if he be asleep*, that is, if we be not answered at the first Call, not to give over, or grow weary of Praying, but to exalt our Voices, and double our Importunity, till we receive such Help in time of need, as his infinite Wisdom sees expedient for us. Thus far, I say, the Disciples did their own Duty, and have directed Us in Ours. But somewhat else, 'tis evident, there was, wherein they failed, and for which they are reproved at the 26th Verse; He saith unto them, *Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little Faith?* or, as another Evangelist expresses it, *How is it that ye have no faith? Mark* iv. 40. and S. *Luke*, *Where is your Faith?*

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By this it appears, that, in a ſeaſon of Peril and great Tribulation, it is not enough that we betake our ſelves to no unlawful means for Eſcape, or that we do not reſt entirely upon humane Helps; no, nor yet that we come ſtreight to God, and earneſtly apply to Him for relief. All this the Diſciples did, and yet they were guilty of Something ſo blameable, that, notwithſtanding the imminent Hazard of all their Lives, our Lord, according to the account here, ſaw it reaſonable to rebuke Them firſt, and then the Sea. Now it muſt needs be of great importance, rightly to underſtand wherein this particular Defect lay; that, as their Excellencies provoke our Imitation, ſo their Failings may be ſo many ſeaſonable Preventions to us. And from the ſeveral hands compared together, who have delivered an Account of this matter, it is beyond diſpute, that their Fear was charged upon them, as an Argument of their wanting Faith.

Verſ. 26.
Mar. iv. 40.
Luk. viii. 26.

But doth Faith require, that a Man become blind and inſenſible? Or was it reaſonable to imagine, when the Winds roared, the Seas raged, the Veſſel was ſinking, Death pouring in upon them with every Wave, and their Maſter aſleep; He, in whom alone any Hope could be left, to their thinking, deaf and unconcern'd all the while; Can it, I ſay, be conceived, that Men, in theſe diſtreſſed Circumſtances, ſhould feel no Terrour, betray no Diſorder? To reproach them for Paſſions ſo interwoven with, Weakneſſes ſo inſeparable from, our common Conſtitution and Frame, is, in effect, to reproach them for being Men. And, whatever wicked People may ſuggeſt, or ignorant People ſuppoſe, we may be very confident, that no Command in the Goſpel, no Diſpoſition or Duty expected from us, was ever deſigned to deſtroy, but all tend to exalt and perfect, Humane Nature.

Fear

Fear then, in general, could not be their fault, but ſome Quality with which it was then attended; In the diſcovering whereof, the two other Evangeliſts will aſſiſt us. St. *Luke* relates the Manner of their Application to our Lord in theſe words, *Maſter, Maſter, we periſh:* St. *Mark* in theſe, *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?* In agreement with them, St. *Matthew* muſt be underſtood: and then, *Lord ſave us, we periſh*, is an Exclamation full of Horrour, Confuſion, and Deſpair, in Men that gave up all for loſt and gone. And this, no doubt, was the Diſciples Weakneſs and want of Faith, that they ſuffered the ſenſe of the preſent Danger to drive them to Deſpondency: ſuch as ſuſpected either the Goodneſs, or the Power of Chriſt, to help in this Extremity; and ſeem'd to ſay, Either that their Safety was no part of his Concern, and he cared not if they were loſt; Or elſe, that this was a Difficulty too mighty for him, notwithſtanding the many Miracles they had ſeen ought to have perſwaded the contrary. And thus the Language of their fainting Hearts bore ſome reſemblance to that Reproach at his Crucifixion, *He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave.*

Luk. viii. 24.
Mar. iv. 38.

The Improvement then, which it behoves Us to make of this Example, is that of condemning, lamenting, and ſetting our ſelves reſolutely to ſtruggle with, thoſe Dejections and Miſgivings of Mind, which Calamities and Fears are apt to caſt us into. To ſee and conſider our Dangers and our Wants, ſo as to quicken our Zeal, and take Sanctuary in God, and ſtill to believe Him a ſure Sanctuary, even when Humane Helps prove broken Reeds to us: Not then to limit his Hand, or meaſure it by the weak Arm of Fleſh, but reſt aſſured, that his Power is always invincible, and his Wiſdom and Mercy incomprehenſible. To ſeek him by Prayer, and

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qualifie our ſelves for his Favour, by a holy Importunity, and a ſtrong Faith. In ſhort, To ſettle this One, this moſt important Truth upon our Minds; That, let our Enemies be never ſo many, never ſo mighty, our Adverſities never ſo grievous, our Dangers never ſo formidable; ſtill nothing can either bind the Hands, or bound the Love of God. But he always can, and always will, deliver and do, as he knows to be moſt for the benefit of them that ſerve him faithfully. An eminent Inſtance whereof my

III. *Third* and Laſt Head gives us; The Deliverance, I mean, of theſe Diſciples, related in theſe words, *Then he aroſe and rebuked the Winds and the Sea, and there was a great Calm.* Upon which I ſhall very briefly make Two Remarks; One of the Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, Another of the Extent and Perfection of the Aſſiſtance we may depend upon from the Goodneſs of our God and only Saviour.

1. His Compaſſion, *Firſt*, is obſervable, in condeſcending to the Requeſt of theſe Diſciples, though not recommended by all the Perfection it ought to have had. The Philoſophers heretofore, in their Diſtinctions of Fear, allowed a ſort of it, which it was no Diſparagement to a Man of Virtue and Courage to be affected with. And our Bleſſed Lord, who made us, and who vouchſafed, in his own perſon, to feel the Infirmities of Fleſh and Blood, does, upon all occaſions, ſhew himſelf tender and gentle to them, and willing to cheriſh the firſt Seeds and Beginnings of a Faith yet feeble in us. This is evident in fact, that the Men, who, in their cooler Thoughts, have the juſteſt Notions of God and his Providence, do nevertheleſs, in ſome Extremities, find their Underſtandings diſturbed, their Thoughts confounded, and Reaſon and Religion for a while juſtled aſide. In ſuch Caſes, it is our Duty to check

Metus qui cadere poteſt in conſtantem virum. Cic. Offic. l. 1.

the Diſorders, that we cannot abſolutely prevent; to call up, as ſoon as may be, the Powers of Conſideration and Faith, and lay faſt hold on that Hope, which is deſervedly ſtyled *the Anchor* of toſs'd and Tempeſt-beaten Souls. And, provided this be done, our Frailties and Surpriſes ſhall never be charged to our account; but will certainly move pity, and ſhew us the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God, by opening the way to a glorious and happy Deliverance from the Temptations we lie under.

2. And for this Hope my *Second* Remark furniſhes Ground ſufficient; For, our Saviour *rebuked the Winds and the Seas*, and even thoſe deaf and mercileſs Elements heard and obeyed his Voice. The like effectual Change ſhall always follow, when God gives the Word; No Danger, no Oppoſition, can ſtand before it. The fiercer and more dreadful theſe are, the more only they contribute to the rendring his Powet ſenſible, and his Goodneſs ſignal, in that compleat Deliverance, that ſucceeding Calm, which at once will refreſh us after, and reward us for, our paſt Fears and Troubles. So great reaſon hath every Chriſtian to ſupport himſelf, with thoſe words of the Holy *Pſalmiſt*, *What though the Earth be moved, and the Hills carried into the midſt of the Sea: Though the Waters thereof rage and ſwell, and the Mountains ſhake at the Tempeſt of the ſame? God is in the midſt of us, therefore ſhall we not be removed; God ſhall help us, and our Enemies ſhall melt away. The Lord is our Light, and our Salvation, whom then ſhall we fear? The Lord is the ſtrength of our Life, of what then ſhould we be afraid?*

Pſal. xlvi. xxvii.

To conclude in a word. This Goſpel ſets before us a lively Emblem of God's dealing with his Servants, and a plain Intimation, both what we are to expect from him, and what we are to do, to juſtifie our Dependence upon him. Violent Shakings, and

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ſtrong Convulſions, are incident to the Fortunes, not of Private men only, but of Communities and Kingdoms; This is the Lot of the Beſt, of the Greateſt, of the Church, of the whole World. God hath no where engaged to keep off Aſſaults and Temptations. He thinks it encouragement enough to ſuſtain us under, ſuccour us in, and, at his own due time, to deliver us out of, our Dangers and Diſtreſſes. When therefore theſe attack us, either in our Perſonal, or our Publick Capacity, our Buſineſs muſt be to ſeek his Protection by earneſt and conſtant Prayer; and thus to ſilence all thoſe wicked Diſtruſts, which frail Nature, the Prevalence of ſenſual Affections, and the Extremity of Afflictions, are too apt to betray us into: To remember, that though our Selves are weak, yet our Redeemer is mighty: That the *ſtormy Wind*, which cannot *riſe* but at his *word*, ſhall, when he pleaſes to command, be immediately lay'd by it again: That He is diſpoſed to look upon our Sufferings and Infirmities, with a very tender Eye: and, provided we be not wanting to our Duty, he will accept that moſt pious and moſt neceſſary Prayer, which our Church, in alluſion to the Paſſage now before us, hath taught us to put up this day.

Let us come therefore to the Throne of Grace, in an humble ſenſe of *being ſet in the midſt of ſo many and great dangers, that by reaſon of the frailty of our Nature we cannot always ſtand upright:* and may He *grant us ſuch ſtrength and protection, as may ſupport us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

Mat. xiii. 25. 38.

O Lord, we beſeech thee to keep thy Church and Houſhold in thy true Religion; that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly Grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

Coloſſ. iii. 12.

12. Since therefore God hath ſo graciouſly choſen, ſanctified, and loved you that are Chriſtians, let it be your care to behave your ſelves as becomes men thus favoured. Shew the tendereſt Compaſſion, the moſt ſincere Affection to one another, have lowly Opinions of your ſelves, be ſlow to wrath, and patient under Injuries, not haſty to revenge, but imitating the goodneſs of Chriſt to Sinners, in your Carriage to thoſe who have wronged or offended you.

12. *PUT on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering.*

13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye theſe.*

14. Eſpecially let the love of your Brethren, founded on the love of God, and of his love to you, be your conſtant Principle and Practice, for this will make you perfect in all manner of good Works; and in any Difference, let the Peace God requires of you be the Umpire to compoſe it; remembring how he hath united you into one Body, his Church, which is a Mercy that calls for your greateſt thanks.

14. *And above all theſe things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs.*

15. *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which ye are called in one Body, and be ye thankful.*

16. Let the Doctrine of the Goſpel be well ſtudied, and liberally communicated, and wiſely employed by you: and in all your Aſſemblies give Praiſes to God, in ſuch holy Hymns and Pſalms, as either the Spirit ſhall dictate, or your own Piety compoſe; ſo as may tend moſt to the Inſtruction and Edification of others, and beſt expreſs your own Thankfulneſs.

16. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſhing one another, in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs, ſinging with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

17. And in all your Actions and Words, whether thoſe of ſolemn Worſhip, or others, addreſs your ſelves to God, and expect his Acceptance by Jeſus Chriſt; For he is the only Perſon, that our Prayers and Praiſes muſt be offered by to his Father under the Goſpel, as all the Mercies are derived down to us through him, for which we pray to, or praiſe God.

17. *And whatſoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

THE Duties *(a)* urged in this Epiſtle at the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Verſes, The Obligations we all have to them, as Chriſtians, The *(b)* high Commendation of Charity, the common Source and Sum of them all; And the Reaſonableneſs *(c)* of *forbearing* and *forgiving*, after Chriſt's Example, have had their places of being conſidered already.

(a) Epiſt. for 1, 2, 3, Sund. after Epiph.

(b) Epiſt. for Adv. *Sund.*

(c) Epiſt. for 4. Sund. in Adv.

My purpoſe, at preſent, is, to fix on the Subject of the 16th Verſe, which Interpreters have generally agreed to underſtand, of thoſe Ejaculations and pious Lauds, which Chriſtians heretofore were ſo famous for, as even by Heathens *(d)* and Enemies to have ſpecial notice taken, how conſtant and conſiderable a part of Divine Worſhip they made. Theſe, as is probable, not only from this and another parallel Text to the *Epheſians*, but a Paſſage very remarkable in the *Firſt* to the *Corinthians*, were ſuch Effuſions of Praiſe, as the Holy Ghoſt (among other extraordinary Gifts, ſeaſonable and neceſſary for thoſe early days of the Goſpel) infuſed into Souls, tranſported with Zeal, and Gratitude, and Love. But, in regard thoſe Gifts have long ſince ceaſed, and we are left to ſtated Methods; in regard we have ſtill ſome ſuch Helps to our Devotion, as, we may be very confident, did originally proceed from the ſame Divine Spirit; (though in an Age far diſtant from our own) I hope it will not be judged improper, becauſe 'tis our own fault if it be unprofitable, for me at this time to ſet before you the Excellence and Uſefulneſs of the Book of *Pſalms*. The rather, becauſe they are a conſtant Portion of our

(d) Plin. Lib. 10. Epiſt. 37.

Epheſ. v. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Publick Service, and ſeem, by the Wiſdom of our Church, to be recommended, with a diſtinguiſhing Concern, to our Study and Remembrance, by being ſo much oftner read in our Aſſemblies, than any other part of God's holy Word.

I ſhall not ſtay to inſiſt (though ſomewhat might be ſaid to good purpoſe on that Subject) upon the Advantage this Collection hath, by being of Poetical Compoſition. It ſhall ſuffice to obſerve, that this is deſigned, as all other Poetry is, or ought to be, for Inſtruction and Delight. My buſineſs ſhall be to ſhew, how well the *Pſalms* acquit themſelves of both theſe Offices; And conſequently, how wiſe a choice They make, who pitch upon theſe for a conſtant Companion, both of their more retired Thoughts, and their more publick Exercifes of Devotion.

1. And *Firſt*, For the Inſtructing Part; They, who at all attend to the Matter here treated of, cannot but ſee the Juſtice of thoſe Ancients, who recommend this Book, as the *Marrow and Epitome of Divine Knowledge*, the *Treaſury and Store-houſe of Piety and Prayer*.

The Ground of true Religion is laid in right and worthy Apprehenſions of God, of his Providence, his Juſtice, his Power, and Mercy. And, where ſhall we be better furniſhed with, whence hope for more lively Repreſentations of theſe ſo neceſſary Truths? How becomingly do the xix^th^, the xxxiii^d^, the civ^th^, and cxlviii^th^ Pſalms, beſides ſundry other incidental Paſſages, declare the Efficacy of that Almighty Word, which did but *ſpeak and all things were made, commanded* only, and *forthwith they ſtood faſt?* The Beauty and Order of the Creatures, The wiſe Uſes aſſigned to each of them, The Eternal Bounds which they cannot paſs, The Glory of the Heavens, The Riches of the Earth and Seas, The wondrous and profitable Variety that fills them, And the perpetual neceſſary dependence of all theſe upon the kindly Influence

and

and prolifick Goodneſs of the Firſt Cauſe, cannot be ſuggeſted, in Idea's more lofty, in Terms more ſuitable to the Dignity of the Subject, than that Spirit, which made, and governs them all, hath here infuſed into the Holy Author.

The Effects of Divine Providence in general, That *Light* of God's *Countenance*, that ſhines, with a peculiar Luſtre, upon the Perſon and the Poſterity of the Good man, Thoſe Guards of *Angels*, that *pitch their Tents* round about his Houſe, and chaſe away the Powers of Darkneſs from their beloved Charge; That diſtinguiſhing care, which *ſaves the Souls* of ſuch *from death*, and *feeds them in the time of dearth*, that *keeps all their bones ſo that not one of them is broken*, ſhelters them *under his wings*, and ſecures them *under his feathers*, and even then, when *thouſands fall beſide them*, and *ten thouſands at their right hand*, forbids *any Plague from coming nigh* Their Perſons or *their Dwellings*; are admirably deſcribed in the xxxiii^d, xxxiv^th, and xci^ſt *Pſalms*. All which are back'd with ſo many Inſtances and Experiments, in other places, relating to *David*'s own Caſe, that, in ſpeaking his own Senſe and Soul, he fills every faithful Chriſtian with holy Confidence and great Tranquillity, when Dangers and Calamities make their boldeſt Approaches.

The direful Vengeance, that awaits the Ungodly, That *Fire and Brimſtone, that Storm and Tempeſt, which ſhall be their portion to drink*, Their Confuſions, and Horrours, and unavoidable Deſtruction, are painted in ſuch gaſtly Colours, at the xi^th, xviii^th, xxxv^th, lxix^th, and cix^th *Pſalms*; as will, if any thing will, ſtrike a damp into the Wicked, chill all their Blood, quell their proud Wrath, and almoſt force them to reflect, though moſt unwillingly, that *there is verily a God that judgeth in the earth*, A God that *will not forget the poor helpleſs Man*, nor *ſuffer the patient abiding*

of the meek to perish for ever; But will *put* the mightiest and the boldest Sinners of them all *in fear*, and *make them know themselves to be but Men*.

These are Evidences of a God and Providence, which all, who believe such things, would naturally expect. But there is one Thought more peculiarly *David*'s own; For he helps us against the Difficulties too, which have staggered so many in this Belief. His xxxvii^th^, lxxiii^d^, and xcii^d^ *Psalms*, do, with wonderful dexterity, unfold the Mystery of Good men being destitute, afflicted, tormented, while the Evil and Oppressors live at their Ease, full of Health, and Plenty, and Power. These assure us, That the *End of the perfect and upright Man is sure to be peace at the last*; That the *Righteous and their seed are never utterly forsaken*; That this short imaginary Happiness of the Wicked is but like the *crackling of thorns under a pot*, a Blaze, soon kindled, and soon out again; That it is a Subject to exercise our Patience, but by no means fit to provoke our Envy; That, the longer they are spared, the higher the Arm is lifted, and the heavier at last the Blow will fall; for *when all the workers of wickedness do flourish*, and look gay and *green as the grass*, 'tis only to reserve them for *the fiery oven*, and that *they may be destroyed for ever*. In a word, Though other Considerations may stop short, yet if we will bear *David* company *into the house of God*, that is, apply our selves to Revealed Truths, *we shall understand the end of these men*, that the *high places where they stand are slippery*, that they *suddenly* and surprisingly *consume, perish, and come to a fearful end*, and that their Glories, and even the remembrance and very Image of them, *vanish like a dream, when one awaketh out of sleep*: That these promiscuous Dispensations are fitted for excellent Improvements, to convince Men of the Folly of Sin, even in its most pompous and alluring Circumstances;

and

and of the Vanity of the World, even in its moſt charming dreſs; to ſhew, how little thoſe things muſt needs be worth, which God permits them, whom he leaſt loves, ſo plentifully to enjoy: to teach us, where to fix our hopes and our affections, that we ought to *have none in heaven it ſelf but Him*, much leſs *any thing upon earth, that we deſire in compariſon of him*: and, that our great Endeavour and moſt earneſt Wiſh ſhould be, to be *guided by his Counſel*, and *after that to be received with Glory*; that, when not only all the World without, and its falſe Comforts forſake us, but when even a part of our own ſelves, this Body, ſhall, as very ſhortly it muſt, decay, and die, and moulder into duſt, *when our fleſh and our heart fail*, God may then, then eſpecially, *be the ſtrength of our heart, and our portion for ever.*

Where, again, can we ſee the Gracefulneſs of Virtue ſet off to better Advantage, Where the Deformity of Vice more juſtly expoſed? The Equity of God's Laws, Their happy Influences on all that ſubmit to them, the Wiſdom, the Comforts, the Delights of Religion, are ſo admirably characterized in the xix^th^, cxix^th^ particularly, and in ſeveral other *Pſalms*, that we may truly ſay, As no Subject is ſo noble, ſo none ever had better reaſon done it than this. Nor does all end in a mere Commendation, but uſeful and ſeaſonable Inſtructions are frequently intermixt, with regard to particular Occaſions and Exigencies. Nothing that can adorn or accompliſh a Good man, is omitted; No Sin almoſt, but hath its Temptations and Snares detected. And we may promiſe our ſelves much the ſame Security and preſent Remedy from theſe holy Writings, that *Saul* felt from their Author. For, we no ſooner betake our ſelves to the Divine Applications of this wiſe Charmer, than the Powers of Hell are bound up and ſubdued, and the Evil Spirit finds it ſelf unable to ſtand before them.

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Farther yet, Here are laid the Foundations of Chriſtianity, ſo very perſpicuous, that no Book in the Old Teſtament is ſo often referred to, throughout the whole Courſe of the New. The moſt Eminent Myſteries of our Faith, the Sufferings and Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Lord, the Malice of the ſtubborn *Jews*, the Treachery of *Judas*, the Succeſs of the Goſpel, the Calling of the *Gentiles*, the Kingdom of *Antichriſt*, foretold in Terms clear and peremptory enough, to condemn all the Gain-ſaying, and Unbelievers. So that nothing could be better accommodated for informing our Judgments, in all neceſſary Points of Faith, and Practice; And, if we next proceed to the other Uſe I mentioned, it will appear, that they are no leſs fitted, to delight and entertain our Affections, than they are proved already, to enlighten our Underſtandings.

The Delight I mean, is a truly Rational and Innocent Delight, ſuch as conſiſts in moving the Paſſions ſweetly, by tender Thoughts and proper Expreſſions, that ſtrike in with the virtuous Inclinations of the Mind, aſſiſt and improve Nature, ſute the ſeveral Exigencies of Humane Life, and the different Affections they of neceſſity raiſe in us.

And upon this Subject, where ſhall I begin, where make an end? For, what Fortune, what Circumſtance is it, to which the uſe of theſe Heavenly Meditations does not accommodate it ſelf?

Do the Riches and Glories of the World exalt our Spirits, and make our Breaſts overflow with Joy? Here are the nobleſt Raptures of Praiſe and Thankſgiving; Such as at once expreſs our Satisfaction, and direct our Views to the Bountiful Hand that gave it. Do theſe Gayeties (as God knows they are but too apt to do) ſwell our Minds with carnal Pride, and a falſe Security, with vain Imaginations of our own ſufficiency, a haughty Contempt of thoſe to whom

Provi-

Providence hath dealt them leſs liberally, and a wicked Forgetfulneſs of our great Benefactor? Here are moſt ſeaſonable Remonſtrances of the Falſhood and Fickleneſs of all Worldly Advantages, the Frailty of our Nature, and the ſhortneſs of our own Continuance. That *Man is as Graſs*, and his moſt flouriſhing Eſtate, like *a Flower of the field*, which, *aſſoon as the wind goeth over it, is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.* That his days are but the *length of a Span*, and in that narrow *compaſs he walks in a ſhadow, diſquieting himſelf* to little and no purpoſe, and *heaping up Riches, which he cannot tell who ſhall gather.* For thus much only is certain in the caſe, that, though One's *Subſtance be increaſed*, and *the glory of his Houſe* never ſo much *exalted, yet he can carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither ſhall his pomp follow him.*

Pſal. ciii. 15, 16. xxxix. 6, 7. xlix. 16, 17.

Do Adverſities or Jnjuries of any ſort preſs us hard, Want or Diſgrace, the Treachery of falſe Friends, or the Malice of profeſs'd Enemies, the Miſchiefs of open Violence, or the ſecret ſtabs of ſlanderous and invenom'd Tongues? We are provided here with ſuitable Applications; Directed in Poverty to that watchful Care, that *takes us up*, and cheriſhes us, *when* even our *Father and Mother forſake us:* Set upon *that Rock*, which cannot be ſhook by any *overflowings of Ungodlineſs*; referr'd to that *Judge of Hearts*, who knows our Innocence, and, when Men *hate us without a cauſe*, and *lay to our charge things that we knew not, will awake, and ſtand up to avenge our quarrel*, and not *ſuffer our Enemies to triumph over us ungodly.*

xxvii. 12. xxxv.

Are we intangled in the toils of *Satan*, and aſſaulted by violent Temptations to Sin? If, through our Frailty, or our Folly, we have provoked the Majeſty of

of Heaven, to withdraw the cheering Light of his Countenance; In all Attacks and Combats with the Adverſary of Souls, in all the bitter Anguiſh of Remorſe, in all the anxious Concern to recover that *loving Kindneſs, which is better than Life it ſelf*, we are ſupplied with the beſt Advice, the tendereſt Reflections, the moſt prevailing Methods of Endearment, the moſt zealous and moſt ſucceſsful Example to this purpoſe. And ſure it was an act of Mercy to the whole World, that God permitted *David* to fall ſo grievouſly, and be puniſhed ſo ſeverely; ſince this not only teaches us, that the Beſt Men may fail, and do not ſtand out of the reach of Danger and Temptation; but makes both his Sin and his Sufferings, his Prayers and his Tears, an everlaſting Monument and Pattern to all ſucceeding Ages.

In a word, (for I muſt force my ſelf to contract this Point) Whether the Precepts, or the Promiſes of God, His Exhortations or his Threatnings; Whether Praiſes or Prayers employ us: There is no Exigence of our Souls, no Condition of Perſon or Fortune, no Mercy we can deſire, none that we would return Thanks for; No poſture of Affairs, in the Church, or in the State, of our Friends, or of our Enemies, but theſe Pſalms would regulate our Behaviour under them, and ſuggeſt ſeaſonable Supplications for them. Of ſo wondrous happy a Compoſition are theſe Divine Poems, ſo inſtructive, ſo pleaſurable; So entertaining while they teach, ſo improving while they delight; ſo ready, ſo effectual a Cure to thoſe Pains and Paſſions, which they charm and aſſwage.

Of theſe Excellencies the good and wiſe Men, that have gone before us, declared a due Senſe, by conſtantly commending this Book to men's Private Meditations, and allowing it a more than ordinary ſhare in the Publick Devotions of the Church. Concerning both theſe Uſes I will add ſomewhat, and ſo conclude.

1. And

1. And *First*, For Private Meditation. The Care taken in this reſpect was formerly ſo great, that the moſt and the meaneſt had a conſiderable part, and the Men of better Capacity, ſeem to have had the whole of it perfectly by heart; Inſomuch that St. *Chryſoſtom* deſcribes the Labourer at his Work, the good Woman at her Houſhold Affairs, nay, even the young Children mixing ſuch pious Ejaculations, in the Intervals of their Buſineſs and Diverſions. And happy were it ſure, if the Memories of all People were ſo profitably ſtored, and the vacant ſpaces of their Time ſo virtuouſly filled up. For it is the Mind's peculiar Excellence, that, as its Thoughts are never weary, ſo neither can they be abſolutely idle. Here then (inſtead of thoſe polluted Images, which nurſe up Vice, and poyſon their Sobriety, and Chaſtity) Men might make a Virtue of Neceſſity; and, in the midſt of a laborious Care, to provide for Themſelves and Family, might deceive their Time and Toil, by making ſweet Muſick to God; might thus repair that want of Leiſure-hours, and more compoſed Devotions, which Buſineſs will not ſuffer them to have. But that indeed, which ſhould moſt powerfully recommend ſuch a Practice, is, that this is doing the Work of Heaven, while upon Earth. For a great part of what we know, concerning that Place of Bliſs, and its glorious Inhabitants, is, that they live in perfect Harmony and Love, perpetually ſinging Praiſes before the Throne of God. And ſure, if there be any Senſe of, any Pantings after that happy State, we cannot but delight in joyning with that Bleſſed Choir; in raiſing our Hearts as high, and labouring to get ſuch fore-taſtes of their Joys, as our preſent Diſtance, and the frailties of mortal Fleſh and Blood, will now admit us to.

2. But then indeed do we approach neareſt to thoſe bliſsful Regions, when, with united Hearts and Voices,

Voices, we publickly ſet forth the Praiſe of our Almighty Creatour, and moſt Merciful Redeemer. And therefore theſe Pſalms have born always a very conſiderable part in the Divine Worſhip, both of the Jewiſh and the Chriſtian Church. That ſeveral of them were compoſed expreſly for the Service of the Tabernacle and the Temple, is plain. And as well our Saviour himſelf, as the State of his Church under the Goſpel, have ſo great an Intereſt in them, that theſe Prayers, and Praiſes, and Complaints continue very applicable to the Godly of all Ages. And, that Men might, in Our manner of ſerving God, the better imitate that Conſent of Saints and Angels above, that no Tongue might lye idle, but all joyn in ſo neceſſary, ſo acceptable a Work; the People, in Preſent, as well as Primitive, Congregations, have been allowed their ſhare too. Either by Conſort, where Muſick was cuſtomary; or by repeating the Verſes by turns, where that advantage could not conveniently be had. All which, and going over the whole Book of Pſalms in the Courſe of every Month, help to ſtir up one another's Zeal, to imprint and faſten theſe things in the Memories of Men; enable their Devotions Abroad to furniſh proper Matter for thoſe at Home, and enrich their Mind with a Treaſure of pious Remarks and Reflections, to be drawn out for ſuch uſes, as each Perſon's Temper diſpoſes him to, or his private Circumſtances ſhall beſt direct.

But it muſt never be expected, that the moſt innocent or moſt beneficial Inſtitutions, ſhould eſcape all Cenſure and Scruple. The Malice of ſome, and the Weakneſs of others, call every thing into Queſtion. For the Conviction therefore of Them, who ſeek occaſion of Blame, where there is none; and for the Satisfaction of Thoſe, who would be glad to find, that in reality there is none; I will juſt mention ſome of the principal Objections, againſt our uſe of theſe Pſalms

in

in the daily Publick Service; and leave ſome ſhort Hints with you by way of Anſwer, which may vindicate the Church's Practice in this Matter.

1. Now the *Firſt* Objection, I ſhall mention, pretends the Pſalms to have been compoſed, upon occaſions peculiar to the Times and Circumſtances of their reſpective Authors; and therefore wholly impertinent, and unfit for the uſe of other Ages and Perſons. This is far from being the caſe with a great number of them, which are equally fit, and edifying, for all Places and Seaſons. And even for the reſt, which it may ſeem moſt to concern: The Defence is obvious, from thoſe Intimations already given, that Chriſt and his Church are ſo often referred to, ſo clearly predicted there; Which renders them of general Concernment to all Chriſtians. And ſure ſuch an incommunicable Property cannot belong to *David*, in thoſe Pſalms whereof himſelf was the Author; ſince our Bleſſed Lord hath ſo often uſed, and interpreted, and his Apoſtles argued from, many Paſſages ſpoken, as in *David*'s own Perſon. For the truth and force whereof, I appeal to our Saviour's own words upon the Croſs, and St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſes on his Reſurrection; the one in *Jeruſalem*, the other at *Antioch*; But both addreſs'd to People verſed in theſe Scriptures, and not to be impoſed upon by falſe Applications.

Mat. xxvii. 46. Pſal. xxii. 1. Luk. xxiii. 46. Pſal. xxxi. 5. Act. ii. 25,--31. xiii. 35, 36, 37.

2. It hath been a *Second* Exception, that, however a Private Uſe of them may, where every Man's Diſcretion will guide him, to that which is proper for his own Purpoſe; yet a Publick Uſe of theſe, and all theſe Pſalms, as they offer themſelves promiſcuouſly, cannot, be convenient: Becauſe, ſuppoſing all to joyn, the Afflicted give Thanks, the Proſperous Mourns, and the Eaſy Complain. Now the Anſwer to this is very eaſy. For Men, then met, are look'd on as one

Body,

Body, and as having a common concern in all the Providences of God, not only that are now, but that ever were, to his Servants and People. But waving this: Is not the Mercy of God over every one of his Works? and hath not the moſt diſtreſſed Creature breathing received more, than he deſerves, or hath been ſufficiently thankful for? Are not our very Sufferings for excellent Ends, and may not the Calamities of our Outward greatly promote the Happineſs of our Inward-man? Do not even Theſe then demand our Thanks; Thanks for being afflicted no ſooner, no heavier; Thanks for the Comforts our Afflictions have ſtill left us; nay, Thanks for being afflicted here, with a deſign to prevent our being tormented hereafter? And therefore Praiſe cannot be uncomely in any Mouth, or at any time. Then for the Proſperous, if He hath no Infelicities (but who is there ſo perfectly happy as to have none?) of his own to deplore; yet, is he not bound to remember and lament thoſe of his Brethren, to expreſs a Sympathy for his Fellow-members of Chriſt's Myſtical Body, and to reckon himſelf a Sufferer in them, and with them? And once more, will not the Recollection of other, eſpecially Good, men's Adverſities, very naturally excite in us great Gratitude, for that Tenderneſs and Long-ſuffering of God, which hath preſerved, and laid ſo much leſs upon us, who have ('tis probable) deſerved to endure ſo very much more?

3. A *Third* Cavil hath been taken from the Curſes and Imprecations to be met with there, as not agreeable to Chriſtian Charity, and the Temper of Him who hath commanded us, to *love them that hate us*, and *pray for them that deſpightfully uſe us and perſecute us*. Be it allowed, that higher Degrees of Charity and Meekneſs are now required, than under the Law; and that ſome things, excuſable in the *Jews*, or in

David,

David, are not a Pattern, nor ſo much as pardonable for Chriſtians. Yet ought it to be conſidered, (1.) That no Temporal Judgments are final, but capable of becoming Bleſſings, in order to a future State: And therefore, to People incorrigible by gentler means, as it may be Mercy in God to inflict ſuch, ſo it may be no breach of Charity in Us, to pray that he would deal with them in ſuch manner, as may effectually reclaim them from their Wickedneſs, and prevent their farther hardening in Sin, and their everlaſting Damnation. (2.) That it is always lawful (with due reſignation to God's Will) to ask our own Safety and Deliverance from Trouble; and, if matters are brought to ſuch paſs, that theſe cannot be compaſſed any other way, we may, in order to it, pray for the Humbling and Confuſion of our Enemies. (3.) That *David* is to be looked upon in the quality, both of a Prophet, and an Eminent Type of Chriſt, and thus His Enemies and God's are inſeparable, and the ſame. Thus thoſe forms of Imprecation, as they ſtand in our Tranſlation, are rather Predictions of the Vengeance, God reſolved to take, on the blaſphemers and perſecutors of our Lord and his Goſpel; and ſo ought to be read with thankful Acknowledgments of that Power, and Goodneſs, and Truth, which have appeared in their reſpective Accompliſhments, and ſo wonderfully vindicated his own Cauſe. And (*Laſtly*) we may conſider both *David*'s Enemies and *Chriſt*'s, as Figures of our Spiritual Enemies, the Prince and Powers of Darkneſs: And ſure we need be under no ſcruple or reſtraint againſt the Tempter and his helliſh Accomplices, that ſo earneſtly labour our eternal Ruine. Some, or All, of theſe Reaſons may, I hope, ſuffice to ſatisfy Men in the uſe of theſe Pſalms; and, that it is not the Compoſer's fault, but their own, if they feel from hence provocations, to ſuch a frame of Mind, as is in any degree inconſiſtent with

the Duties of Forgiveneſs, and truly Chriſtian Charity.

4. Once more, Some object, That, not having attained to *David*'s Piety, they dare not make his Profeſſions, of *having weaned their Souls, and kept them low, of praiſing God ſeven times a day, ſtudying his Law all the day long, loving his Commandments above Gold and Precious Stones, or thouſands of Gold and Silver*, and the like. Now theſe Men ought to conſider, that, in ſuch Paſſages, *David* is our Pattern, and expreſſes Perfections, neceſſary for us, to be put in Mind of; Such as we all ſhould aſpire after, and be aſhamed and very ſorry, if we have not yet attained to.

In a word, Let us make it our great Aim, both in Publick, and in Private, to repeat *David*'s Words, with *David*'s Affection: to tune our Souls to his Harp, and enter into his Spiritual Joys, and Griefs. For, as we have no right to his Comforts, without his Repentance, ſo neither do we *make Melody to the Lord*, unleſs we *make it in our Hearts*. It is the Hand, that touches the Inſtrument, not the Inſtrument it ſelf, that recommends the Compoſition; and we muſt have Pure Hearts, Abſtracted Spirits, Heavenly Deſires, and Inflamed Devotion, if we hope to make good Conſort with Saints upon Earth, or to have a Place in the Glorified Quire of Heaven.

The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. xiii. 24.

(According to our Lord's Interpretation of the Parable, *v.* 37, *&c.*

24. *THE Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man, which ſowed good Seed in his Field.*

24. The ſtate of the Goſpel, and of them that live under it in the preſent World, is this. Chriſt propagates in all parts of the Earth a Doctrine of Truth and Purity; The Fruits whereof are Men of ſound Priciples, and holy Lives. *See Ver.* 37, 38.

25. *But when Men ſlept, his Enemy came and ſowed Tares among the Wheat, and went his way.*

25. But the Devil, a conſtant Enemy to all Goodneſs, (taking advantage by the Negligence of ſome, and the Infirmities of the Beſt Men) corrupts this Doctrine, and obſtructs the Succeſs of it, by introducing falſe and pernicious Principles; the Product whereof are Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, and Men of wicked and ſcandalous Lives. *See Ver.* 38, 39, 41.

26. *But when the Blade was ſprung up, and brought forth Fruit, then appeared the Tares alſo.*

26. This was carried on ſo ſubtilely and ſecretly, as not preſently to be pereeived; but in proceſs of time, the thing diſcovered it ſelf.

27. *So the Servants of the Houſholder came and ſaid unto him, Sir, didſt not thou ſow good Seed in thy Field? from whence then hath it Tares?*

27. For Good men, by comparing the Tenets and Practices of theſe Men with the Doctrines of the Goſpel, plainly diſcern the difference between them: and know that theſe Men, whatever they pretend, do not follow the Inſtructions of Chriſt, but of the Devil.

28. *He ſaid unto them, An Enemy hath done this. The Servants ſaid unto him, Wilt thou then that we go, and gather them up?*

28. Mean while how zealous ſoever their concern may be to remedy this Miſchief, it is not the Will of God, that it ſhould be done by utterly Exterminating ſuch wicked Men, and ſending them out of the World, in Methods of Blood, and barbarous Executions.

29. *But he ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up alſo the Wheat with them.*

29. This God diſallows, both becauſe the Inconveniences of ſuch a Proceeding would prove greater to the Good, than any, which the ſuffering Evil-men to continue among them at preſent can produce;

30. And, because the punishment of such is reserved for the end of the World: At which time God will command his Angels to sever the Evil and the Good, when both shall be brought to Judgment. And then the Wicked *shall be cast into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth:* Thus shall they be punished for all the Mischief done, and the Scandal given by them, in this World. *Then shall the Righteous also shine forth, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.* Thus shall They be rewarded for that Patience, and Meekness, and Constancy, which the evil Principles and evil Deeds of those Wicked are permitted to exercise with many hard Tryals, in the present Condition of things.

30. *Let both grow together until Harvest, and in the time of harvest, I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the Wheat into my Barn.*

COMMENT.

See Vers. 3---9. 19.---23.

OUR Blessed Saviour had, in a former Parable of the Sower, signified the different Successes of his Word, proportioned to the different Dispositions of its Hearers. This concerned the Seed-time, the very Act of Planting and Propagating the Gospel. But here He, in another Parable, denotes a Disadvantage, to which even the best Seed, and the best Soil would be liable, after it was sown; from Tares being sown upon it. Of which Figure in regard Himself hath condescended to be his own Interpreter; all we have left to do on this occasion, is to observe the Substance, and main Scope of the Parable, which plainly amounts to thus much.

That it is the Pleasure of God, to suffer a Mixture of Bad with Good Men, during the state of his Church in the present World: That, notwithstanding the many Inconveniences, which may, and do arise from such a Mixture, He doth not think fit, either by Judgments from his own Hand immediately, or by Authorizing Men to be the Ministers of his Vengeance upon one another, utterly to extirpate all Corruption of Doctrine and Manners. That there are very wise and good Reasons for this Forbearance; parti-

particularly, that it is grounded, Partly upon Such, as regard the Good Men, with whom thoſe Wicked are mix'd; and Partly upon Such, as concern thoſe Wicked themſelves.

Now my Deſign is, *Firſt*, To conſider the Reaſons of this Proceeding, ſo far as the Parable hath directed us to them: And then, to conclude with ſuch Inferences, as this Subject will naturally ſuggeſt to us.

1. I begin with the Reaſons for continuing a Mixture of Bad Men, during the preſent ſtate of Chriſt's Church in this World. And of Them, with the Former ſort, ſuch as have reſpect to the Good Men, with whom thoſe Bad are mixt. For, that Their Benefit is conſulted by ſuch Forbearance, is manifeſt from the *Eight* and *Nine and Twentieth* Verſes. Where, upon the Servants proffering their Pains, to *go and gather up theſe Tares*, the Maſter of the Field is repreſented, diſallowing the forwardneſs of their Zeal, as overofficious, highly unſeaſonable, and of very dangerous Conſequence. *He ſaid, Nay; leſt while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up alſo the Wheat with them.* And that this Prohibition is of Service to Good Men, will, I conceive, ſufficiently appear, from the Three following Conſiderations.

1. *Firſt*, Look upon the Matter, as propounded in this Parable, where the Servants were offered for the Inſtruments of rooting out theſe Tares; and the Danger of good Men periſhing, together with the Wicked, ſoon manifeſts it ſelf. Let us ſuppoſe the moſt favourable Circumſtances, that ſuch a Diſpenſation can poſſibly bear. Allow theſe Purgers of the Field to have no other Views, but the Honour of God, the Peace and Security of the Church, the undiſturbed Exerciſe and Advancement of Piety and Virtue: Admit this Zeal of theirs to be, not only untainted with Secular Intereſt and Ambition, but perfectly void of Raſhneſs and Heat; tempered with all imaginable Diſcre-

tion, proceeding with the moſt ſcrupulous Caution, executing Vengeance upon no ſingle Perſon, without the beſt Information Mankind are capable of: Yet even in ſuch a Caſe (and ſuch a Caſe, however poſſible in Suppoſition, I doubt was never true in Fact) the *Wheat* cannot be ſafe, becauſe ſuch Gatherers are never able to make a perfect Diſtinction between the Tares and It: that is, They cannot know exactly, who are truly Good, and who Bad Men. And the Reaſon is, becauſe That, wherein the Eſſential Difference between theſe two ſorts conſiſts, lyes deeper than any Humane Eye can penetrate, even in the Heart, the Will, and the Intentions.

If then the Tares, they endeavour to root out, be Hereſy and corrupt Doctrine, Men can enter no farther into the Merits of this Cauſe, than Outward Profeſſion will guide them. They may know, who liſts himſelf of ſuch a Party, or eſpouſes ſuch an Opinion: But they cannot diſcover, who embraces the Truth out of Temporal Intereſt, and who out of a ſincere Conviction of the Mind: Who refuſe it from a Spirit of Obſtinacy, and Who from want of Capacity, or better Inſtruction. And yet the Honeſt Miſtaken Man is, in a Judgment of Equity, pitiable at leaſt: and the diſſembled temporizing Orthodox, of very ſmall account in God's Eſteem.

Put caſe again, this Tare be Vice and Immorality; Men can ſee and animadvert upon the openly diſſolute and ſcandalous. But, can they purſue the demure and ſecret Sinners, through all the intricate mazes of their Hypocriſy? Can they unlock their Cloſets, draw the Curtains of their polluted Beds, or deſcry the Filthineſs of their Thoughts? Can they diſtinguiſh the Vain-glorious from the Sincere, or ſeparate between the gaudy outſide of a laboured Formality, and the native Luſtre of an inward Purity? Both theſe Men may affect the Eye alike; and yet *One* is

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a *whited ſepulchre, full of rottenneſs, and dead mens bones*; the other a living *Temple of the Holy Ghoſt*: The One hath the *Power of Godlineſs*, the Other only the *Form*; and, for want of the *Power*, is as errand a Tare, as if he had not even the *Form*. But ſtill that Tare may be miſtaken for good Corn, and ſo may this good Corn be ſometimes too for Tares. So that an abſolute Separation is not poſſible to be made, and conſequently neither ſafe to be truſted with, nor fit to be attempted, by Men. No: This muſt be reſerved to that God, who alone can diſcern between Reality and Diſguiſe; For They who are not able to do ſo, can never *gather up* all the *Tares*: To that God, who ſees and makes allowance for Men's particular Circumſtances; The unaffectedneſs of their Ignorance, The violence of their Temptations, The ſuddenneſs of their Surprizes, The uprightneſs of their Intentions, The ſimplicity of their Hearts, Their want of Opportunities to know, or to do, better. All theſe no Man can underſtand perfectly, and therefore no Man can make juſt abatements for them. And, without ſuch abatements, the Security of many honeſt and good People cannot be effectually provided for. For, upon any other Terms, there is no Remedy, but they, who go about to *gather out the Tares, will root up alſo* a great deal of *Wheat with them*.

2. *Secondly*, To this Difficulty on the part of the Gatherers, may be added another no leſs inſuperable one, from the Poſture and Condition of theſe *Tares* themſelves: whoſe Roots are ſo intangled with thoſe of the good Corn, that there is no diſengaging them: no drawing out the One, without tearing up the Other at the ſame time. My meaning is, That the Affairs of Men, in this Life, are ſo intricate and perplexed, and the Intereſts of the Good and Bad ſo nicely mingled, ſo mutually interwoven, that it is abſolutely impoſſible, according to the preſent and ordi-

nary Circumſtances of the Caſe, for any alteration to happen to the Fortunes of the One, which ſhall not very ſenſibly affect the Other alſo. The ſame Titles in Law, the ſame Advantages in Trade, the ſame Hazards of Perſon, are ſhared between them. The ſame Veſſel at Sea, the ſame Family on Land, the ſame Shop in the City, contains both. So that it is not poſſible, according to any Humane Conſideration, for Storms, or Fire, or Peſtilence, or any other common Calamity, to ſever between them.

Not only ſo; but even in thoſe Diſaſters, that are more Particular and Perſonal, the Wicked will have ſome Partners, or Relations, or Friends, who muſt ſuffer in them, or with them, or for them. Nay, ſuffer ſo much the more ſenſibly, as themſelves are better Men; becauſe ſuch are proportionably more tender and compaſſionate. For Virtue, above all things, ſoftens our Hearts, and fills them with kind and merciful Reſentments. Religion is the higheſt Improvement of Humanity and Good-nature; and none, who is a Chriſtian indeed, can ſee the Sufferings, even of Them who deſerve moſt to ſuffer, without Impreſſion and Concern. So great a Mercy is it to the Righteous, that the Wicked are ſpared at preſent. Becauſe it ſaves them a multitude of Tragical and Afflicting ſpectacles; which, if God ſhould take ſwift Vengeance upon Sinners, would render Life a moſt uncomfortable thing, and turn the World into a Scene of Grief and Horrour, of Miſery and Blood.

From hence we ſee, how impoſſible it is, for even that Providence, which can diſtinguiſh exactly between the Good and the Bad, to puniſh the Bad without the Good; except we ſuppoſe a Change to be made in the Condition of all Humane Affairs, and in the very Nature of Goodneſs it ſelf. For as the mutual Relations and Concerns of Mankind are

ordered,

ordered, the Evil cannot ſuffer without involving the Good, and drawing Theſe into a part of the Puniſhment, by ſuffering together with them: And, as the Temper of Religion now ſtands, the Good will at leaſt be touched with a feeling of their Miſeries, and ſo muſt needs ſuffer, and be afflicted, for them.

3. But *Thirdly*. Could the *Tares* be entirely *gathered up* without Danger and Detriment to the Corn, in either of the forementioned Reſpects; yet it is the part of a provident Houſholder to let them ſtand; becauſe, by ſo doing, the Price and Goodneſs of the Wheat is raiſed. Which is as much as to ſay, That a Mixture of Bad Men miniſters many occaſions of Virtue to the Good, and gives them great Advantages of exerting Themſelves, without ſuch a Mixture never to be had: And therefore it is an Eminent Inſtance of the Divine Wiſdom and Kindneſs both, ſtill to continue it. The Deformity of ſome Vices; The folly and unprofitableneſs of others, The vanity of Luſt, and ſenſual Pleaſures, The treachery and diſappointment of all worldly Expectations, would be but coldly repreſented in Words; if we had not living Examples to furniſh undeniable Demonſtration of theſe things: Sad Monuments daily before our Eyes, to bring the truth of the matter home to our very Senſes. But when all this is done, we are then powerfully excited to decline our ſelves, what we cannot but pity, or deſpiſe, or deteſt in others. The ſeverer Diſpenſations of Juſtice upon the Wicked, in the Natural, the Moral, the Providential Conſequences of a profligate Converſation, though exerciſed but ſparingly at preſent, and neither upon all that deſerve them, nor in all the extremity that ſome may conceive reaſonable, are yet frequent and ſharp enough, to daunt the Daring, to ſettle the Wavering, to raiſe the Satisfactions of a

reſolved

reſolved Good man, and to convince as many as conſider them, that God thinks himſelf concerned to take notice of Men's Actions; and that, at ſome time, and in ſome way or other, ſuch as himſelf ſees moſt expedient, he will not fail to execute a viſible Vengeance upon every one, who hardens his Face, and walks in defiance to Him and his Laws.

It is confeſs'd indeed, *Theſe are They that turn the World upſide down*; the Inſtruments of all the Miſchief and Confuſion we ſee and lament in it: But then it muſt be confeſs'd withal, that, were it not for that Rage and Villany, that Deceit and Diſorder of theirs, ſome Virtues would be abſolutely loſt, and others could not but be eclipſed. Were there no Sons of Treachery and Malice, no violent Oppreſſors, no Injurious or Slanderers, What would become of thoſe noble Graces, which vindicate the Innocent, and deliver the Poor from Him that is too ſtrong for him? Where ſhould the *recompenſing evil to no man*; Where the *Bleſſing them* that without any cauſe *curſe and rail at us*, Where the *forgiving* of wrongs, and *loving of Enemies* find a place? So then, as is commonly obſerved in Circulation of Trade, that, were there no Prodigals, little Encouragement would be left for the Frugal and Induſtrious; In like manner, it may be ſaid in Morality too, that every Virtue is powerfully excited, and moſt ſucceſsfully promoted, by ſome oppoſite Vice.

But eſpecially, to name One Inſtance more only, Chriſtian Patience and Fortitude are a plain Evidence of this Point. For it is to the Refractory and Perverſe, the Barbarous and Bloody, that the brighteſt Crowns in Heaven are in ſome meaſure owing. Had not thoſe Tares been ſuffered, not only to ſtand with, but even to top it over, and ſhed their Venom upon the Wheat, the Truth could never have triumphed in her *noble Army of Martyrs*. Nay, which

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is the higheſt we can poſſibly go, the Redemption of Mankind by the Death of the Bleſſed Jeſus, and that moſt perfect Pattern of all Goodneſs, is a Conſequence of this Mixture. For, how could a Perſon ſo excellent be treated ſo ignominiouſly, how that inimitable Meekneſs have ſhone ſo glorioufly, had not God permitted the Treachery of an Apoſtle to betray Him; the Subornation of *Phariſees* to teſtify falſly againſt Him, the Cowardice of a Time-ſerving Judge to condemn Him, and the unrelenting Cruelty of an inflamed Rabble to crucify Him? Nothing more can be needful to ſhew of what importance it is, that God ſhould think fit to forbear very Bad men: Or how much Virtue is beholding to Vice, for its luſtre and force; Since even the Cruelty and Malice of them who wiſh it worſt, awaken its Powers, render the Examples of it more illuſtrious; and ſo, in Fact and in Event, exalt and beautify, while their Intention and Endeavour is to darken and ſuppreſs, it.

Thus much may ſuffice to be ſpoken, of the Reaſons for God's Permitting a Mixture of Tares in this Common-field of the World, ſo far as the Safety and Advantage of the Wheat is conſulted by ſuch Forbearance; That is, The Benefit of thoſe Good Men, among whom the Wicked have Dealings and Converſation. I now proceed to a *Second* ſort of Reaſons, ſuch as relate to the Wicked themſelves.

And of Theſe my Subject leads me to Two, than which no more are neceſſary to be mentioned; becauſe the One illuſtrates the Goodneſs, the Other, the Juſtice of God in this Diſpenſation.

1. *Firſt*. The Goodneſs of God is very manifeſt, in that, by this method, Sinners have longer time allowed them, to recollect and to reform in. For it is an Obſervation of conſiderable weight in the preſent Argument, that the Caſe of this Myſtical differs greatly from That of the Natural Growth. There, what-

whatſoever is once a vicious and unprofitable Seed, can never change its Quality; but Here, theſe Tares may, by the Grace of God, and their own better Conſideration, ennoble their kind, and, after ſtanding long among the Wheat, at laſt become Wheat themſelves. That this is an effect intended by all delays of Puniſhment, S. *Peter* plainly declares, when rendring this Acount of our Lord's deferring to come to Judgment, *The Lord* (ſays he) *is not ſlack concerning his promiſe, as ſome men count ſlackneſs, but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.* And, that this is the Improvement proper to be made of all ſuch Delays, is no leſs evident from S. *Paul*, who, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, rebukes the Jews, for *deſpiſing the riches of God's goodneſs and forbearance, and long-ſuffering*, and repreſents their *not knowing*, that is, not conſidering *that the goodneſs of God leads men to repentance*, as a mark of their *hardneſs and impenitent heart.*

2 Pet. iii. 8.

Rom. ii. 4, 5.

The longer ſuch People are ſpared, the more leiſure and opportunities they have for Amendment. The Examples of Others, the various Diſpoſals of Providence, the ſignal Mercies and Severities of it, are ſo many freſh Arguments, continually offering themſelves, and ſtirring up new Thoughts and ſerious Reflections. And every Judgment, that ſtops ſhort of utter extirpation, is an awakening Call; an Expedient for cheriſhing the Principles of a ſpiritual Life. The lopping off luxuriant Branches, and cutting the Stock down low, as well as digging about and dunging the Tree, are methods of Pruning and Cultivating: But plucking up by the Roots, and caſting into the fire, cannot become a Maſter of the Vineyard, till all other Experiments have been made uſe of to no purpoſe. And, ſince it would ill agree with the Cha-

Character of a Wiſe and Good, as well as a Juſt and Holy God, to give his Creatures over to Deſtruction, before they have proved themſelves abſolutely incurable; What ground can We find for Complaint, that He allows the very worſt, and moſt profligate, ſuch abundant Proofs of his Tenderneſs; that, if they periſh at laſt, it may appear to all the World, this comes to paſs, not becauſe He wanted any Inclination to pity and to ſpare them; but purely from the obſtinate Abuſe of repeated Means and Mercies, and becauſe They could never be prevailed upon to ſpare and to pity themſelves? And this illuſtrates the Goodneſs of God.

2. The Second Reaſon, which vindicates his Juſtice, is, that God hath appointed a Seaſon, in all reſpects proper, and hath reſerved to himſelf the work of ſeparating theſe Tares from the Wheat; Which therefore need not, muſt not be anticipated. This is the purport of the *Thirtieth* Verſe, *Let both grow together until the Harveſt: and in the time of Harveſt I will ſay to the Reapers, Gather ye together firſt the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the Wheat into my barn.* The true Import of which Paſſage, without all Controverſie, is, That God hath fixed a Day, in which he will judge the World: a Day, whoſe Proceedings ſhall make a Diſtinction between the Righteous and the Wicked; a perfect Diſtinction, and ſuch as the Condition of this World cannot admit: That the Puniſhment of the Damned, intimated by binding and burning the Tares, will be irreverſible, and extreme, ſuch as can leave the Good no room for envying or grudging the now-boaſted Proſperity of the Ungodly: That the Diſtribution of final Rewards and Puniſhments is therefore a Royalty peculiar to God, what he lets no other into; That the Time of that Diſtribution is in a future State; That ſuch a Time will, in the courſe of things, as cer-

certainly come, as in Nature a Harveſt follows a Seed-time; And that the Reaſon, why it is not yet come, is becauſe matters are not yet ripe for it. So that, upon the whole, So long as Forbearance can be any way of ſervice, either to the Perſons on whom it is immediately exerciſed, or to any others by their Influence or Example; ſo long it is continued. But, when theſe Uſes ceaſe, and Mercy hath done its part; then Vengeance ſhall ſucceed. The Good Corn ſhall be parted from the Refuſe, and each aſſigned to a place worthy of it. The One laid up, as a valuable Treaſure, in the Granary of this heavenly Houſholder; the Other caſt out, as a Nuiſance, no longer to be endured, and burnt in Indignation, as unquenchable, as the Fire into which it is caſt. All which conſidered, Men have reaſon to be contented with God's own Methods, and his own Time; and ſhould not throw out raſh Cenſures of Providence, nor deſire to haſten a Juſtice, that will take care to do it ſelf right: Will do it effectually, in its proper Seaſon, to the entire Satisfaction of every Good man, and the Eternal Confuſion of all obſtinate and incorrigible Sinners.

I come now, in the *Laſt* Place, to conclude with a few of thoſe many Inferences, which the Subject in hand very naturally ſuggeſts to us.

1. And *Firſt*. From what went before, concerning this mixture of Tares with the Wheat, it is exceeding evident, that the Viciouſneſs of Mens Lives can be no ſufficient ground for ſeparating from their Communion. And this condemns that popular declaiming, which draws away weak Minds, and pretends to juſtifie the breaking off from a ſound eſtabliſh'd Church, becauſe (ſay They who ought not to ſay it) the Lives of them, who abide by its Worſhip and Diſcipline, are evil. Were it our purpoſe to recriminate, the Field is ſpacious enough. But Truths of this kind are really of no weight. We are not,

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nor ought any man to be, ſo weak, as not to ſee, that, what our Saviour declares ſhall never be prevented in this World, what he repreſents as the caſe of the Chriſtian Church in general, can never be a Juſtification, for diſavowing, and diſturbing any National Church of Chriſtians in particular. Let them, before they preſume to go away, prove, that our Doctrines give countenance to, that we do not declare againſt, lament, and condemn, any Practices, that reflect upon our Profeſſion: Let them next, if they can, inſtance in any Religious Perſwaſion, in any Age, which the Lives of none of its Profeſſors did ever caſt a blemiſh upon; And till they can do ſo, let them think a little, how unwarily They act, who preſume to lay the Ground of a Separation, in an Argument, which, if worth any thing, and purſued through all its Conſequences, muſt as effectually diſpoſe the men that uſe it, to renounce the Chriſtian, nay even that too, which is commonly called Natural, Religion it ſelf.

2. *Secondly.* It follows likewiſe from hence, that the Beſt men are not to expect ſo diſcriminating a Providence, as, when the Wicked ſuffer, ſhould always skreen Them from ſuffering too. For God hath put this World into a regular Courſe of Cauſes and Effects. He hath knit Men together in greater and leſs Societies; The Cement of this Union is ſecured by mutual Alliances, promiſcuous Dealings, and united Intereſts. All this, no doubt, is for their mighty Benefit. But then they muſt take the Bad with the Good. For, the ſame Reaſons will cauſe the Inconveniences, as well as the Advantages, of People thus combined, to be of vaſt Extent and ſpeedy Communication. They muſt be ſo, except we ſuppoſe the ſtated Order of Nature to be broke in upon, at every turn; which it cannot become a Wiſe Governour to do. Nor is there any occaſion he ſhould do it,

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in favour of every Good man. It is enough, that this be done ſometimes, upon very extraordinary Emergencies; And that, when This is not done, God makes ſuch Men amends, for what they ſuffer by being in ill Company. The Former hath been often, the Latter moſt certainly will be, done: But one great Work of the Laſt Day of Account would be ſuperſeded, if Holy Perſons ſhould endure nothing here, for which they are to expect a Recompence hereafter.

3. *Thirdly.* As the Juſtice of Providence is not obliged to prevent the Evil of Suffering in Good men, ſo neither is the Holineſs of Providence obliged, to prevent the Evil of Sin in Bad men. It is enough, that (as the Son of *Sirach* expreſſes it) God *hath left Man in the hand of his own Counſel*; that he does not compel any one to do ill, nay, that he is ready to aſſiſt them in doing well. And that, when they will do what they ought not, in deſpight of the Checks of natural Conſcience, the Light of Reaſon and Religion, and the importunate Sollicitations of the Holy Spirit; he then gets himſelf Glory of their Diſobedience, defeats the Malice of their Purpoſes, and brings that Good out of Evil, which the Actors never intended. And This he hath been ſhewn to do, by making Vice it ſelf ſubſervient to Virtue, and rendring the moſt unjuſt and barbarous Perſecutions fruitful in Patterns of Heroick Piety, and the brighteſt Crowns of Righteouſneſs.

Eccluſ. xv. 14.

4. *Fourthly.* As little can it be inferr'd from hence, that this Prohibition to gather out the Tares makes it unlawful, for the Chriſtian Magiſtrate to puniſh heinous Malefactors with Death. For they are not puniſhed thus, as Offenders purely againſt God and Religion, but againſt the State, and the Laws of the Country, to which they belong. Now this is a Privilege and a Right common to all Civil Societies, to give freſh Sanction to the Laws of God, to preſerve

ſerve their own Properties and Conſtitutions, and to inflict what Penalties are neceſſary, upon ſuch as boldly invade them. And therefore He who ſuffers capitally in ſuch Caſes, remains as liable to the Judgment of God, for the Tratſgreſſion of the Divine Law, as if the Laws of Men had never taken cogniſance of him at all.

5. *Laſtly.* Hence it will be no hard matter to diſcern, what is our own Duty in the Caſe before us, namely, that, in regard the Tares are ſown, will come up, and muſt ſtand; Our Buſineſs ſhould be, to keep from being corrupted by a mixture, which we cannot altogether avoid. To provide and execute wholſome Laws, which may put ſome convenient Check at leaſt to this pernicious Growth. To endeavour the infuſing into theſe Weeds a more generous Nature, and the bringing Men off from their evil courſes, by good Advice, and pious Examples. Particularly, to imitate the kind Compaſſion of this heavenly Houſholder, and, by all ſoft and gentle Means, all courteous and engaging Behaviour, to win ſuch over to a better ſenſe. Above all, not to fret at his Forbearance, or be envious at Evildoers, but wait his good pleaſure for unravelling the Secrets of his own myſterious Providence: In full aſſurance, that a Day is coming, when all Mankind ſhall ſee abundant reaſon to joyn in that Celeſtial Song of *Moſes* and the Lamb: *Great and marvellous are thy Works, O Lord God Almighty; Juſt and true are thy ways, O King of Saints.* Rev. xv. 3.

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The COLLECT.

1 *John* iii. 8.
1 *John* i. 12.13.
Galat. iv. 4,5,6.
1 *John* iii. 2, 3.
Matth. xxiv. 30.

O God, whose blessed Son was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of God, and Heirs of Eternal Life: Grant us, we beseech thee, that having this Hope, we may purifie our selves even as he is pure: that when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with Thee, O Father, and Thee O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever one God, World without end. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

1 John iii. 1.

1. Consider, I beseech you, how exceeding great kindness God bears to Good men, and how manifest a proof of it he hath given in admitting all such to the Title, the Hopes, and the Inheritance, of Sons. Which Dignity notwithstanding, we are not to wonder, if the men of the World be ill affected towards us, who neither are rightly acquainted with Him to whom we are thus related, nor treated Him better in whom this Relation is founded.

1. *BEhold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

2. Mean while this Relation implies and assures to us many valuable Advantages; greater than we can yet understand. But thus much is certain, that in the next Life we shall be exalted to a greater resemblance of Him; for we shall then have a nearer and more distinct knowledge of Him, whom to be like is the perfection of our Happiness.

2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

3. And this, if it be indeed esteem'd and expected as our Happiness, will put us upon being as like him at present as may be in Holiness of Life.

3. *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

4. But a man that sins deliberately, and wilfully, is so far from being like him, that he acts contrary to him, and to the Law given us to walk by. For all Sin is a breach of some Law of God.

4. *Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the Law.*

5. And

5. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.*

5. Now the very design of his coming into the World, was to take away the power and dominion, as well as the guilt and punishment of sin: and therefore he was not himself under either, but absolutely pure and sinless.

6. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

6. All then who maintain this relation entire, are so too, as far as humane frailties will permit: and they, who are not so, but allow themselves in sin, make vain boasts of their Light and Knowledge.

7. *Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

7. Do not then suffer your selves to be imposed upon by any false Pretences of this kind. For he only is a Good man and the Child of God, who leads a good life, and imitates Christ's Holiness.

8. *He that committeth sin is of the Devil: for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.*

8. The man that indulges himself in any Sin, is of another Family, a Child and Imitator of the Devil. For the Devil hath been continually employed in Wickedness, ever since the World began. This he first practised himself, this he first drew Mankind into, and this he is now continually suggesting and promoting. All which is so directly opposite to God and Christ, that the Son of God came into the World, on purpose to counterwork and overthrow the Devil, by destroying his Works, and such are all sorts of Sin.

COMMENT.

AFter what manner all true Christians are the *Sons of God*, how great an Honour this Relation is, what glorious Hopes it inspires, what noble Effects it ought, in reason, to produce upon our Minds and Lives, and what inestimable Privileges it derives upon us even at present; are Points which have been, in some measure, considered in a Former Discourse. But, how far not only that did, but even the most accurate Representation of these Privileges, possible to be made by Man, must needs, fall short of the Dignity of this Subject; S. *John* acquaints us here. For he declareth,

Epist. for Sund. after Christm.

that, though already poſſeſſed of this Relation, we are ſo far from, as yet, attaining to the poſſeſſion, as not to have juſt Notions, and a perfect Underſtanding, of the full Extent of it, or all the Advantages it entitles us to. *Beloved, now are we the Sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be.* But, though the whole of this do not appear, yet a part does, and that ſo much, as may ſuffice for the purpoſes, which the *Love* that *beſtowed* it *upon* us, intended it at preſent to ſerve. Enough to excite us to, or encourage us in, a vigorous Purſuit of thoſe Virtues and Graces, which may become the Character of Perſons ſo honourably diſtinguiſhed here, and render them *meet to be Partakers* of the Glories reſerved for them hereafter. *But we know, that when He ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.*

Verſ. 2.

Verſ. 2, 3.

To this Paſſage my preſent Thoughts ſhall be confined: and the Uſe I deſign to make of it, is Threefold.

1. *Firſt.* I will endeavour to make you ſenſible, that the not having a diſtinct View, and adequate Underſtanding, of the Happineſs, provided for Good men in the World to come, is no reaſonable Objection againſt thoſe Hopes, and that Dependence upon it, which the Scripture propounds, as a moſt powerful Motive to a Holy Life.

2. *Secondly.* I ſhall conſider that Part of this Happineſs, which we already do know; deſcribed by *being like to Chriſt, at his appearance,* and *ſeeing him as he is.*

Verſ. 2.

3. *Thirdly.* I ſhall ſhew, that the Belief and Expectation of this Happineſs is, in the very nature of the thing, a proper and ſtrong Inducement to Pie-

ty and Virtue. For, *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.* Vers. 3.

1. I begin with the *First*. That the not having a distinct View, and adequate Understanding, of the Happiness, provided for Good men in the World to come, is no reasonable Objection against those Hopes, and that Dependence upon it, which the Scripture propounds to us, as a most powerful Motive to a Holy Life. That no such full and distinct View can at present be had, is confess'd by S. *John*, in the Passage now before us; who makes no difficulty to declare, that though we be already the *Sons of God*, it does *not yet appear what we shall be.* In agreement whereunto, St. *Paul* describes our *walking* in this World, to be by *Faith, not by Sight*; and at the very instant that he calls upon us, to make the *things eternal* our End and Aim, he says, that these are *things not seen.* In the mean while, the things thus hidden from us, are not left destitute of their proper Evidence, for such he asserts *Faith* to be; A Principle fitted for Operations so powerful, that Persons walking by it may, even in death it self, *be confident*, and with great *willingness* put off this *Body*, in the strength of that assured Expectation, they thus are possess'd with, of another and better State to succeed, when *they shall be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.*

2 Cor. v. 7.

Chap. iv. 18.

Hebr. xi. 1.

2 Cor. v. 8.

These Two or Three Texts, singled out from a great many of like importance, but especially the Examples of Holy men, set down in the *Eleventh* to the *Hebrews*, may suffice to shew, what Effects have actually been produced in Others, and are still expected in Us, from our Notices of a Future Happiness, however at present imperfect and obscure. My De-

ſign is, in this Particular, to prove, that ſuch Effects are very reaſonable, by obſerving ſomewhat, very briefly, concerning the Cauſes of ſuch Obſcurity; The Nature of that Principle, to which thoſe Effects are aſcribed; and Its Sufficiency for that purpoſe, notwithſtanding the Darkneſs of the matter propounded to it.

1. The Cauſes of this Obſcurity proceed, partly from the Condition of the things themſelves, and partly from that of our own Nature. For, in regard the Clearneſs of any Object depends upon a juſt proportion, and agreement with the Faculty, by which it is to be perceived; where that Object is either very remote, or very diſproportionate, the Perception muſt needs be dark and confuſed. Now ſuch is the Caſe of this Happineſs we are treating of; It ſtands at a mighty diſtance, and cannot be attained in the Life we now lead; It requires many Alterations to be made in our Perſons, in order to qualifie us for the Enjoyment of it: It does not manifeſt it ſelf to us by any Light of its own, nor is to be diſcovered by ſuch Collections or Inferences, as Reaſon and our natural Powers are wont to make, concerning Matters near at hand, familiar with, and commenſurate to them: It is the free Gift of God, the Product of his Will, and Bounty to his own Creatures; and therefore the Ingredients, of which it conſiſts, as well as the Conditions, upon which it ſhall be beſtowed, being entirely at his own diſpoſal, can only be learnt by ſuch Declarations, as He in mercy hath been pleaſed to afford, for our Support and Encouragement. Some Preſages and Expectations of a future Happineſs after Death have indeed been entertained by the beſt and wiſeſt Men of all Ages. But, for a firm Perſwaſion and certain Account of this matter, we are beholding to *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is therefore moſt truly ſaid to have *brought life*

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and immortality to light through the Goſpel. So that they who undertake to determine or explain this matter, farther than this Light guides them, have no firm ground to go upon, but talk altogether in the dark. And yet it is neceſſary to obſerve, that, even in the Goſpel it ſelf, the Declarations made there are not, in all Points, ſuited to the Nature of the thing, but expreſs'd in Terms full of Condeſcenſion. They are induſtriouſly accommodated to the Capacities of Men, dwelling in Bodies of Fleſh, converſing with groſs and material Objects, and moved by ſenſible Impreſſions: In ſhort, God ſpeaks to us about theſe matters, in ſuch Language, as we may underſtand, rather than in ſuch as is intended to deſcribe things ſtrictly as they are; yet ſo, as at once to work upon our Affections and Deſires, and to prevent our reſting ſo far upon theſe Repreſentations, as from thence to form low and carnal Apprehenſions of a Bleſſing, which ſtoops to us under ſuch Ideas, only becauſe we are not perfect and abſtracted enough to receive it under better.

This is the ground of all thoſe Metaphors and Parables, which figure out to us the Joys of the Bleſſed, by *eating and drinking at Chriſt's Table*, by *ſumptuous Banquets*, by *Marriage Feaſts*, by fertile *Paſtures*, and *beautiful Dwellings*, magnificent *Cities*, whoſe Sun never ſets, and whoſe Delight is ſevenfold, by *Thrones*, and all the Enſigns of Honour and Majeſty peculiar to Princes upon earth. And yet we are ſufficiently forewarned againſt taking thoſe Paſſages in their moſt obvious and literal meaning, when told, that the *Children of the Reſurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither hunger nor thirſt*; and conſequently, that there will be an end of all ſuch gratifications of Senſe, when both the Neceſſities that require them, and the Appetites that purſue and recommend them to us, ſhall be no more. Luke xx. 35. Rev. vii. 16.

In the mean while, though it were an Indignity to the Blifs prepared for the Saints in Heaven, by conceiving of it juſt as theſe and ſome other like Paſſages ſound, to ſink it down ſo low, as the Pleaſures coveted by, and confined to, the meaneſt of our Faculties; Yet is there this uſe to be made of them; That we from hence are taught to conclude, that all the Satisfaction, which can poſſibly reſult from the greateſt Plenty, the higheſt Honour, the moſt exquiſite Beauty, and every rational and truly manly Pleaſure; As much, and more than the moſt Senſual can enjoy, or imagine, or wiſh for, to be not only equalled, but vaſtly exceeded, in the Happineſs of the next World. For the very great variety of Comparifons and Alluſions, made choice of to this purpoſe, intimates, that there is no ſort of Joy, which can then be worthy of us, not any that we ſhall be capable of, in that State, which will not then be indulged us in its utmoſt perfection: but all that we can love, or like, delight and take comfort in, ſhall be preſent with us, and poſſeſs'd by us for evermore.

As therefore it is no Reflection at all, either upon the Truth, or upon the Excellence, of thoſe Arts, and Sciences, and wiſe Deſigns, which Men value moſt, and are beſt ſerved and improved by, that Children, and People of the meaneſt Capacities, are not in a Condition of making themſelves Maſters of them; but that, in order to their being ſo, Ripeneſs of Years, and Judgment, much Thought, long Exerciſe, and painful Study, are neceſſary Preparations: So neither is it any Diminution, but indeed a juſt and very high Commendation, of the Bliſs and Glory reſerved for the next World, that they are not fully and clearly to be known, in a ſtate, where the wiſeſt of Mankind muſt, in regard of theſe matters, be content to *think*, and *ſpeak*, and *underſtand as Children*; where They that *know* moſt, *know but in part*, and They

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that imagine they ſee cleareſt, ſee only *through a Glaſs darkly*. Were theſe things leſs excellent, we ſhould be better able to diſcern, and to deſcribe them: but then, in proportion as they were more exactly to be comprehended, they would in their own nature be leſs worthy of our Love. For God hath ſet bounds to the Faculties of our Mind, as well as to the Organs of our Sight; and, in both caſes, made ſome Objects, of which we have no juſt and adequate Perception, not from the Smallneſs, but the exceeding Greatneſs, not from the Darkneſs, but the too ſtrong and dazzling Light, of the thing we would be glad to ſee. We muſt therefore look upon the things not ſeen, as the more deſirable, upon that very conſideration. It is with Theſe, as with God himſelf; Their Glory is not to be approached by any Man; not by any in the preſent Condition, and while we carry thoſe Defects about us, which the Wiſdom of Him that made us hath thought fit for Souls incumbred with Fleſh and Blood. We muſt wait with Patience for that happy Change, which ſhall clear and take off the darkneſs of our Glaſs, bring us nearer, and acquaint us intimately well with thoſe Glories, which to have brought down to our Capacity, in the proſpect here, had been to abate our Happineſs, in the Enjoyment, hereafter. And we have reaſon to be content with that little of them in compariſon, which may be ſeen at preſent, ſince they who murmur for want of more, do in effect repine at being Men; than which, nothing can be more impious. They find fault, that God deſigns to make them happier than they can ask or think, than which nothing can be more ungrateful and abſurd. Eſpecially, if the little we do, or may know, be ſo wiſely ſuited to our Circumſtances, that nothing needful, either to our Duty, or our Intereſt, is wanting. And, that ſuch is the Caſe in this matter, I ſhall briefly endeavour to make plain, by conſidering

2. Se-

2. *Secondly.* The Nature of that Principle, to which the Scriptures aſcribe the Effects, that theſe Glories are required to produce, and the Sufficiency of it for that purpoſe. Now what this Principle is, the Apoſtle hath informed us: For, when ſpeaking of this Subject, he obſerves, *We* in this life *walk by Faith, not by Sight:* and the Force of *Faith* is declared by terming it *the Evidence of things not ſeen:* That is, An aſſured Expectation, or a Perſwaſion of what we ſo believe, which is as free from danger of deceit, as if the thing it ſelf were actually preſent, or given ready down in hand. And, if this be the true Account of Faith, then it is plain, when future Rewards are the Object of it, there are but two things requiſite to qualifie it for any the nobleſt Effects upon us; (1) That we be furniſhed with good Grounds for the Certainty, and (2) That we be ſatisfied of the Value and Excellence, of what we thus believe: For thus they are a reaſonable Motive to do and ſuffer for them, all they were promiſed to ſupport us under, or excite us to. Now,

1. The Certainty of theſe Rewards is implied in the very Notion of that Faith, whereof they are the Object. For Faith, ſtrictly and properly taken, is an Aſſent upon credible Teſtimony; and Religious or Divine Faith is an Aſſent given to the Teſtimony of God. Now This is credible in the higheſt degree; becauſe, though other Teſtimonies may be true, whatever is thus atteſted muſt needs be true. And therefore St. *Paul* could never have expreſs'd himſelf, in words more ſatisfactory and ſignificant, than he hath done upon this very occaſion, when mentioning *Eternal Life*, as that which *God, who cannot lye, hath promiſed.* The only Difficulty then, and ſingle Enquiry, concerning this Matter, is, Whether the Scriptures, which contain thoſe Promiſes, are really the Word of God. And that they are ſo, we

Tit. i. 2.

have

have all the Evidence, that a Point of this nature is capable of. More, than any other ſuch Fact tranſmitted to Poſterity was ever able to produce in its own Vindication; Much more, than Men make no Scruple to reſt, and venture their All upon, in other Caſes eſteemed of the laſt Importance: As much, as is conſiſtent with the reckoning Faith a Virtue, and rewarding it, as an Act of Obedience and Choice. And therefore, to Perſons ſatisfied, that a future Happineſs of Good men in another World is what the Truth of God ſtands engaged for, it can be no reaſonable Objection, that the Condition and Circumſtances of that Happineſs are not at preſent fully underſtood. Becauſe the true ground of believing it is not any Argument, drawn from the Nature of the Thing it ſelf; but from theſe ſhort and very plain Maxims, that whatſoever He declares, who neither can deceive nor be deceived, muſt needs be ſo; and whatſoever he hath promiſed and determined will ſurely be accompliſhed. That He, who is Faithful, cannot deny himſelf by going back from his Word; and He, who is Almighty, muſt be able to perform abundantly above what we are able to hope or to conceive. That He, who in his infinite Goodneſs revealed thus much to us, would have revealed more; had More been neceſſary to compaſs the proper end of this Diſcovery. He only could inform us in this matter; and therefore, from his affording no larger and fuller meaſures of ſuch Knowledge, it is moſt rational to conclude, that his Wiſdom, which is alſo infinite, as it could beſt judge what was fitteſt, ſo it diſpoſed this Light as was fitteſt, for our Capacities and Occaſions.

2. In the mean while, this very Inability of ours to conceive and fully comprehend the Happineſs of our future ſtate, as it takes nothing off from the Certainty, ſo does it help to aſſure us of the Greatneſs

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and Value of that Happineſs. It being with this, as with the Nature of God himſelf, that the Perfection and Excellence of the thing is chiefly repreſented in negative Terms; becauſe, as hath been often ſaid already, the Poſitive deſcription of ſo noble a Bliſs is at preſent too exalted a Subject for our Underſtandings. Theſe employing themſelves upon things ſuitable to a ſtate of Frailty, and Mortality, and being acted upon by Impreſſions of Senſe, are forced to judge of, and do moſt eaſily apprehend thoſe Privileges, by Compariſons. Thus, the importunity of our Wants is ſo preſſing, and the labour and anxiety for ſupplying them ſo perpetual a Burthen, that it could not but be a proper Method of recommending Heaven, by ſaying, That the

Rev. vii. 16. Bleſſed above do neither *hunger nor thirſt any more.* The Calamities, that embitter our Lives, are ſo various, the Paſſions that diſorder and diſquiet our Minds, ſo tumultuous and violent, that a Deliverance from theſe is a Mercy moſt ſenſible to Men, who groan under ſuch burden and ſlavery; and therefore it may well make us in love with thoſe Regions of Tranquillity, that there *Tears*

xxi. 4. *ſhall be wiped away from all eyes, and there ſhall be no more ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain: becauſe the former things are paſſed away.* The Poſſeſſions of this World are ſo ſlippery a Tenure, and our own Continuance in it ſo ſhort, and ſo uncertain; that it muſt needs affect us, to conſider, how great a difference to our Advan-

1 Cor. ix. 25. tage there is in a *Crown incorruptible: a Treaſure and Inheritance that fadeth not a-*

1 Pet. i. 4. *way: Bags that wax not old: True Riches, which the Ruſt corrupteth not, and the Thief*

Luke xii. 33. *cannot approach: A Joy that no man taketh*

Joh. xvi. 22. *from us; a continuing City, everlaſting Ha-*

Heb. xiii. 14. *bitations; and when the earthly Houſe of this Taber-*

Tabernacle, the Body, *ſhall be diſſolved, a Building of God; a Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* A new and better Clothing for our Souls, which outwears Time it ſelf, and, *ſwallows up Mortality in Life.* Luk. xvi. 9, 11. 2 Cor. v. 1, 4.

Now, When the Condition of glorified Saints is in this manner repreſented to us, we are not from hence by any means to ſuppoſe, that the utmoſt of their Happineſs conſiſts in a mere ſtate of Eaſe and Indolence. But, becauſe the Dangers, and the Miſeries, the Fears and Frailties, the Sorrows and Sufferings of this preſent Life, are, in a greater or a leſs degree, the Lot and Burthen common to all Mankind; an entire Deliverance from, and ſtanding clear out of the reach of theſe, is a Deſcription, that comes neareſt home to the Feeling of everyMan, and ſuch as his own Circumſtances, when conſidered, teach him to make a true Eſtimate of. By theſe alone we are ſecure of a ſtate after Death, infinitely to be preferr'd before that, of which we are apt to be now ſo inordinately fond. But the Scripture does not reſt here, it mentions, as I have formerly obſerved, * many Ingredients of that Bliſs hereafter. But none more comprehenſive, none more deſireable, than That, which I have propounded for the Subject of my

* *Epiſtle for the Innocents Day.*

II. *Second Head*; And is expreſſed by the Apoſtle in theſe words, *We know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* In ſpeaking to which, I ſhall very briefly enquire, (1.) What is meant by *Seeing God as he is.* (2.) How this gives us an Aſſurance of being like him: And (3.) Wherein that Likeneſs, ſo far as at preſent we know of it, may be ſuppoſed to conſiſt.

1. That

1. That the *Seeing* of God implyes very great Bliſs, no doubt can be made by any, who recollect, that Good Men are pronounced *Bleſſed*, upon the account that they ſhall *ſee* Him, and that the Puniſhment of Ill Men is ſummed up, in their not being ſuffered *to ſee Him*. But ſtill, when we ſpeak of Seeing God, this is not meant of Seeing with Bodily Eyes. For theſe can act only upon Matter and Bodily Objects, and conſequently God, who is a Spirit, is not to be ſeen this way. Which is ſo plain, that I could have hardly thought it worth while to mention it, had not ſome Nice and Speculative Perſons, thought it worth theirs, to diſpute very ſolemnly about it. *Seeing*, no doubt, is in this Caſe, an Action of the Mind; and intended to denote all that Knowledge, all that Enjoyment, all that Delight, reſulting from both, by which one Intelligent Spirit is capable of Underſtanding, and Loving, and Admiring, and taking Pleaſure in another. All which is very fitly repreſented by Seeing; becauſe this is of all our Senſes, the moſt Noble and Refined, the moſt Critical and Exact, the moſt Perfect and Comprehenſive, the moſt Unwearied and Inquiſitive, the moſt Deſirable and Delightful. And therefore than this there could not a fitter Image be choſen, to intimate to us the large and clear Knowledge of God; the unconceivable Pleaſure of Contemplating Him, and the Joy of Loving, and being Loved, by Him, which this Preſence of His, and the Sight of Him *as He is*, lets all the Bleſſed into, and feaſts them with for ever.

Matth. v. 8.
Heb. xiv. 4.

And here again, By *Seeing God as He is*, we muſt not imagine a full and perfect Comprehenſion of his Nature, and Excellencies, to be intended. For ſure, and eaſy to diſcern it is, That no finite Underſtanding can extend it ſelf to infinite Knowledge; and therefore, how mightily ſoever our Faculties may be enlar-

enlarged in the next Life, and no doubt they will be mightily enlarged; and how graciouſly ſoever God may then manifeſt Himſelf to us, as He will manifeſt Himſelf very graciouſly; yet ſince thoſe Additions exalt only, but do not alter, our Nature, and theſe Condeſcenſions change not, nor take off from His: We ſtill are finite, He ſtill infinite; and by neceſſary Conſequence, too vaſt and too ſublime, not for any Humane only, but for any created Underſtanding, of whatſoever Rank or Quality, entirely to know, and in this Senſe of the Phraſe, to *See Him as He is*.

Hereby then we are given to underſtand, that glorified Spirits in Heaven attain to a Knowledge of God, the moſt perfect that they can poſſibly receive, and quite different from the utmoſt they can attain to in their preſent ſtate. Here they ſee *through a Glaſs*, which repreſents the Lines, and Figure, and Complexion only; there they ſhall ſee *Face to Face*, ſhall, as with naked Eye, contemplate the Eſſence of this Adorable Being, and have a direct and nearer view of thoſe Excellencies, which here they behold through another *Medium*, and by Reflection only. The Creation and Providence, the Scriptures and Word of God; theſe are the Glaſſes, that now ſhew Him to us. And through thoſe Glaſſes we ſee but *darkly* neither: The Original ſignifies an obſcure form of Speech, the true import whereof is not expreſs'd, but left to be gathered by Study, and carrying much Difficulty in it: Like the Parables of the Prophets and our Bleſſed Saviour, or the Types and Figures of the Old Law; which the generality of them, who heard and ſaw, were far from apprehending the Myſteries wrapp'd up in them. And thus when this Veil and theſe Clouds of Fleſh and Senſe, theſe Scales that hang now before our Eyes, ſhall be done away, we ſhall ſee all things clearly; and be able to look ſtedfaſtly againſt a Light, which, like

ἐν αἰνίγματι.

like that darted from Heaven upon St. *Paul*, would, as matters are at preſent, even blind, and ſtrike us to the ground, with the inſupportable Strength of its luſtre. Hereby we are taught to expect a full degree of Evidence, that will exclude all manner of doubt or diſſatisfaction; as the higheſt Certainty is that, which comes from ſeeing with our own eyes. Hereby the moſt tranſporting Joy that can be, as now thoſe Objects move and affect us more, which are perceived by ſight, than by any other Senſe. Hereby, in a word, all the Advantage that our Nature, when moſt exalted, can have, to capacitate it for larger Happineſs, and all the Happineſs we can enjoy, when fitted up for enjoyment, to gratifie and fill all thoſe Capacities. And, if the Men on earth do by long time and travel, from the imperfect Diſcovery of ſome beloved Truth, feel a Satisfaction, to which all the Pleaſures of the moſt indulgent Epicure are as nothing: What can we think muſt be the Joy, the Gayety, the Triumphs, of thoſe Souls, who ſee, in God, the Truth and Excellencies of all things, as in their common Source and Centre; who behold the *fair Beauty of the Lord*, continually ſeeing all that is lovely, and loving all they ſee, and poſſeſſing all they love: and being wrought themſelves into the moſt intimate Union with, the moſt deſirable reſemblance of the adorable Perfections of Him, who is thus in Himſelf, and to Them, *All in All?* For that's the next thing I promiſed to enquire into, the Conſequence of, or at leaſt the Happineſs concomitant with, this Viſion of God: implied in thoſe words of St. *John* before us, *We know that we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

The meaning of theſe may either be, that there is a neceſſity of our being made like God, in order to our attaining to ſuch a ſight of him in the next Life, as hath already been explained: Or elſe, That

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the being admitted to ſuch a Sight of God, will have this certain effect of drawing us to a nearer reſemblance of Him, than it is poſſible for us, at preſent, to come up to. Concerning Each of theſe I ſhall ſpeak very briefly.

First. We may depend upon being like God hereafter, becauſe he hath promiſed ſuch a Sight of Himſelf to us, as that likeneſs is a neceſſary Preparation for. The Wiſeman hath obſerved moſt truly, that *the corruptible Body preſſes upon the Soul, and this Earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind*, diſtracted with many Thoughts. The Knowledge, Men arrive to in this Condition, does, for the greateſt part, depend upon ſenſible Images; and we find it exceeding hard, ſo to abſtract our Thoughts from Matter, as to diſcourſe, with any Accuracy of things, which are not thus repreſented to our Minds. And hence, as I took notice, it comes to paſs, that theſe things are chiefly known to us by Negatives, ſeparating from our Idea of them ſome of thoſe Imperfections, which we find and feel in others of a groſſer Subſtance; and aiming at ſome tolerable Perception of them, by Figures and Reſemblances, borrowed from ſuch as are moſt familiar to us. To give us therefore a Capacity of knowing God, our Minds muſt be put into another Frame, our Faculties exalted, and the Objects we contemplate imparted to us after a way different from what they now are. This we have ground to infer, from the Condition of our Souls at preſent; that they hereafter will ſee and underſtand after another manner, though we cannot determine preciſely, what particular manner that ſhall be. Wiſd. ix. 15.

And, as it is with the Knowledge of theſe things, ſo we may rationably conclude it to be, with regard to the Reliſh of, and Satisfaction from them. To heighten this, it is requiſite that thoſe Difficulties and laborious Methods, thoſe very ſlow and painful

advances be removed, which now are ſuch Checks to our Studies of this kind, and render them ſo dry, and diſcouraging, to the greater part of Mankind. And this no doubt will be done, by the putting off that *Fleſh and Blood, which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God:* By that *Change*, which ſhall be wrought in our Perſons and our Tempers, by being ſet at large from thoſe Neceſſities and Appetites, Frailties, and Paſſions, which now incumber and cramp up the Mind. A Freedom from theſe cannot but render the Thoughts of Spiritual objects more eaſy, and more agreeable, give another taſte and turn to our Souls, refine our Delights and Deſires, as well as our Ideas. And, ſince our likeneſs to God did at firſt conſiſt in an intelligent and free Spirit, the more this is improved, and the leſs it is clogged with the Body, the more neatly we reſemble Him. And, the nearer we reſemble Him, the more we ſhall be qualified to know, and to love Him. And thus it may be affirmed, that the *Seeing God as he is*, infers *our being like him*, as an indiſpenſable Prediſpoſition; ſuch as all they who have not arrived to, are under a natural Diſability of ſo ſeeing Him. They are in the Circumſtances of dim Eyes, and fully Glaſſes; the Former muſt be cleared and ſtrengthned before they can ſuſtain, the Latter cleanſed and poliſhed, before they can take in, the Rays of ſo bright and beautiful an Object.

1 Cor. xv. 50.

2. The Other, and I think, more commonly received Senſe of the Words now under Conſideration is, That the *Seeing God as He is* will produce in Us a likeneſs to the Perfections we ſee. The Foundation of all Godneſs is laid in right Apprehenſions of God. For Mankind ſeem to have been all along pretty well agreed in this Point, That to be like God is both our Duty and our Happineſs. But then the different Notions Men have of God, have led them into diffe-

different ways of Endeavouring after that Likeneſs: And, repreſenting God to themſelves otherwiſe than He is, they conſequently framed themſelves upon different Models, and have invented falſe, and ſometimes moſt extravagant and impious, Schemes of Religion. This was the Caſe of Heathens heretofore, who, the better to countenance their own Lewdneſs and Exceſſes, impoſed upon Themſelves and the World, with a Pretence of voluptuous, drunken, and laſcivious Deities. This is too much the Caſe of Chriſtians too, who indeed acknowledge nothing in God, but what is truly excellent and good, and adore Him, as the Source and Sum of all Excellence: Yet, according to the difference of their Complexion, or Cuſtoms, they attend ſo much more to, and often prefer one Excellence ſo far above, another, as that hereby is produced a great Diverſity, both in Opinion and Practice. His Juſtice, his Power, His Mercy, his Holineſs, are all confeſs'd Perfections; Yet, becauſe the due Temperament of theſe is not duly underſtood, as one or other of them happens to be uppermoſt in our Thoughts, and more ſtrongly to affect us, occaſions are taken for ſuch Notions of God, as ſet thoſe Attributes at variance, and do not only ſhew God, as He is not, but diſpoſe us to conform our ſelves to that miſtaken Idea we have of him. Were the Sanguine and the Gay, the Liberal and Open, and the Phlegmatick and Melancholy, the Man of Rigour and Preciſeneſs, the Fataliſt and the Moroſe, to be examined thoroughly; I make little doubt, but their Notions of Almighty God would be found at as wide a diſtance from each other, as we plainly ſee their Humours and Deportment to be. And all this probably from the ſelf-ſame Cauſe, of *Seeing God as He is not*, and judging of that imitation He requires, by falſe Syſtems of their own.

Again. Nothing can be more evident, than, that the Will of Man, though free in the choice of this or that particular Object, is yet in the general determined to the Choice of Good. And, when the thing chosen is not really such, it is, because the Man was cheated with a false Appearance of Good. And this is our Misery, that we often mistake Evil for Good, or else prefer a less before a greater Good. So that, all our Vices and Moral Defects are owing to want of Knowledge, or Consideration, of Care, or of Integrity, in judging of our true Happiness, and the means proper to attain it. But now, in the next Life, all things will be set in their true Light, all the Bribery and Byass of Sense and Flesh will then be taken away, and we shall not only be enabled to understand, but inclined to approve and choose, that which is best. We shall then, without any dividing our Affections, discern God to be our Chief, our only Good; and a Conformity to his imitable Excellencies, to be our perfect Happiness. In short, we shall then do that, which we here wish for in vain, see Vertue in all its Charms; of which, as an Eminent Philosopher * hath well observed, could we behold the full Lustre and Beauty, it would, even in this frail and corrupt state, enengage our Hearts so powerfully, as scarce to leave a possibility of deviating from it. And how noble, how wonderful, may we well imagine, will the Improvement be, of Minds thus fixt upon one only amiable Object, always contemplating with Joy unspeakable, always admiring and loving, always copying after, and approaching to, the sum of all Perfection: And, to use in this Sense the words of St. *Paul*, *with open Face beholding, as in a glass, the Glory of the Lord, and changed into the same Image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord:* A Glory constantly shining upon, and communicating it self to them-

* *Cicer. de Offic. Lib.* 1.

2 Cor. iii. 18.

them. Thus much may ſuffice to ſhew, what certain Connexion there is between our *ſeeing God as He is*, and our *being like Him:* and it leads us very naturally too to the

3. *Third* Enquiry propoſed under this Head, Wherein that Likeneſs to God will conſiſt. Now the Scriptures, from whence alone we can ſafely take our Meaſures in this Matter, have, among other things relating to it, acquainted us, that our Bodies, when they die, ſhall be quickned again; that they are, as Seed caſt into the Ground, to come up with vaſt Improvement, and very different from the Condition they lay down in. That they are *ſown in Corruption*, but *raiſed in Incorruption*; *ſown in Diſhonour*, but *raiſed in Glory*; *ſown in Weakneſs*, but *raiſed in Power*; *ſown Natural Bodies*, but *raiſed Spiritual Bodies*. That *Fleſh and Blood*, as now it is, *cannot inherit the Kingdom of God:* And therefore, to qualify us for that Inheritance, *This Corruption muſt put on Incorruption, and this Mortal muſt put on Immortality*. And, how this mighty Alteration ſhall be effected, we are likewiſe informed. For *the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, at his Coming from Heaven, *ſhall in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the laſt trump, change our vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf*. Thus we ſhall be like to Chriſt, as Man, in the utmoſt Perfection this part is capable of. And, in the ſame reſpect we ſhall be like him as God too, ſo far, as the being ſet above all the Incumbrances and Defects of theſe Bodies we now carry about us can make us like him. No Wants or Infirmities, no Importunity of Appetite, no Unevenneſs of Paſſion, no Hunger, or Thirſt, no Wearineſs or Sleep, no Pain or Sorrow, no Feebleneſs or

1 Cor. xiv. 42, 43, 44. 50. 53. 1 Cor. xv. 52. Phil. iii. 21. Rev. vii. 16, 17.

Luke xx. 35. or Decay, no Sickneſs or Old-age, no Dying any more: But *Beauty for aſhes, and Joy for mourning*, even the *Joy of our Lord*; A Joy, that we are very ſignificantly ſaid to *enter into*, becauſe it is too vaſt to enter into us: A Joy, that could not be perfect, if it were not immortal; and a Crown, therefore to be valued infinitely above any other, becauſe *incorruptible, and that fadeth not away.*

But, as God himſelf is a Spirit, ſo the moſt deſirable part of our likeneſs to him will be that of our Souls. And theſe will be like him, in clear and unerring, in full and comprehenſive Knowledge, in *ſeeing face to face*, in *knowing even as we*

1 Cor. xiii. 12. *are known.* In perfect Holineſs, for there

Pſal. xvii. 15. ſhall we *behold God's face in righteouſneſs, there we ſhall not have ſpot, or wrinkle, or*

Epheſ. v. 27. *any ſuch thing*, but be unſtained and without *blemiſh*; There every Temptation and Occaſion of Sin ſhall ceaſe, no Devil to ſeduce us, no Vanities or Pomps of the World to allure us, no *warring of the Spirit againſt the Fleſh*, and

Phil. iv. 7. *the Fleſh againſt the Spirit.* But a *Peace, that paſſeth all Underſtanding*, even the

Coloſſ. iii. 15. *Peace of God ruling in our Hearts*, without Controul. Like him, in fervent and unbounded Charity, the Love of God, and of our Brethren; Without any Emulation, or Envy, or Grudging, to give check to the latter; Where all ſhall be of one Heart, and of one Soul, and nothing ſhall be ſeen, or heard, or felt, but *Righteouſneſs,*

Rom. xvi. 17. *and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* Such is the Likeneſs, which, we know, ſhall belong to us, The Enlargement of our Underſtandings, the Rectitude of our Wills, the Purity and Harmony of our Affections. A State ſo perfect, ſo very like to God, as no other ever was, or can be; Not even that of Man in his primitive Innocence; For then it was in-

deed

deed poſſible for him not to ſin, but in this it ſhall not be ſo much as poſſible for him to ſin. But, tho' we cannot be ſo happy here, yet Some approaches toward it we may, and muſt, and, if we believe and expect it in good earneſt, we certainly ſhall, make, even now. For that is my

III. *Third* and Laſt Head, That the *knowing we ſhall be like God, and ſee him as he is*, cannot, in the very nature of the thing, but be a proper and very powerful inducement to Piety and Virtue. *Every one*, ſays S. *John*, *that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure.* The *purifying himſelf as he is pure*, is to be underſtood, like thoſe Commands of *being holy as God is holy*, and *perfect, and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and perfect.* All which are intended, not of an Equality, but of a Likeneſs only; and That, ſuch a Likeneſs, as our preſent Condition will admit. Not of a State altogether ſinleſs; but ſuch degrees of Goodneſs as may be attained to, ſuch as imports an Allowance for neceſſary Frailties and inſeparable Defects, and a gracious acceptance of ſincere Endeavours, inſtead of abſolute Perfection.

1 Pet. i. 15. Matth. v. 48. Luke vi. 36.

Such is the Purity mentioned here, as a natural Conſequence of this glorious Hope. For, *every one that hath this Hope in him*, can have it no otherwiſe, than upon the Terms, which the Promiſes of God have thought fit to limit it by. Since therefore the *Seeing God* is a Bleſſing peculiar to the *pure in heart*; Since it is declared, that *without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*; that *the Unrighteous, Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, effeminate Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, Thieves, Drunkards, Covetous, Revilers, Extortioners, ſhall none of them inherit the Kingdom of God*; 'Tis plain, that this Purity and Holineſs here are indiſpenſable Conditions of obtaining Happineſs here-

Matth. v. 8. Hebr. xii. 14. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

hereafter: and They, who indulge themſelves in any ſuch Abominations, deceive their own Souls with falſe Expectations, and do not properly *hope*, but impudently preſume.

The Truth is, God, in his Wiſdom, hath ſo ordered the matter, ſo admirably contrived our Nature and our Duty, that Virtue and Happineſs are one and the ſame, differing but in the Circumſtances and ſeveral Proſpects, we conſider and view them under. The Good begin their Heaven upon Earth, and finiſh there what was imperfect here: So that, the more they mortifie and maſter their ſenſual Appetites, purge off their Corruptions, raiſe their Affections up to things above, improve their Minds by the ſtudy of Religion, acquaint themſelves with God, by frequent Prayer, and heavenly Meditation, wean themſelves from, and get above the World; The more they are ſpiritualized, and, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the Saints in light.* They have rendred the Joys of the next Life more familiar to their Thoughts, have already learn'd to taſte, and are in a better diſpoſition to enjoy, the full delight they ſhall bring. As He, who is already vers'd in the Language, and Laws, and Cuſtoms of a Country, is better fitted to converſe in, and improve the Pleaſures and Advantages of it, than any raw and unexperienced Perſon, who goes to ſettle there, without ſuch previous Skill or Preparation. And therefore Thoſe Men may at leaſt be judged to have qualified themſelves for higher degrees of Bliſs and Glory, who have, even before they came thither, already had their Hearts, their *Treaſure*, and *their Converſation in Heaven.*

I know, ſome Men think thoſe Arguments liable to Objection, which undertake to prove, that, were a Wicked man received into Heaven, he could not think himſelf happy, where every thing would be found ſo oppo-

oppoſite to his Temper and Senſe of Happineſs. Now this is an Aſſertion, founded on that General Maxim, That all Pleaſure reſults from the Agreeableneſs of the Object, and its being ſuited to the Faculty, or Palate, of the Party enjoying it. And, have we any Warrant to pronounce this here a Caſe exempted from ſo general a Rule? They who argue thus, allow, with the Objectors, that Heaven muſt be perfect Happineſs to all who inhabit there. The Objectors, I hope, allow too, that none but Good men can inhabit there. And it ſhould be remembred, that they, who put the caſe, are ſenſible, they ſuppoſe a Condition impoſſible in fact. The Deſign of this Argument therefore is only to ſhew, that the Day of Recompence will find us, exactly as Death left us; that, if we have not kill'd the *Man of Sin*, Death will not do it for us: And, that there is ſo exact a Congruity between our Duty and our Reward, that they do not differ in nature and kind, but in degree, and greater and leſs Perfection: and conſequently, that the labouring to be like God here is the only Expedient we know, for being like him hereafter.

I will not deny, but ſome, who have led ill Lives, may, upon their Repentance at laſt, be ſuddenly received to Mercy; Nor will I venture to ſay, ſuch is uncovenanted Mercy. But, when even this is done, there muſt be a Change of Affections, (the very Notion of Repentance implies thus much;) And certainly no Man, who conſiders this matter with ſerioufneſs, will venture his All upon it. The Hazards are ſo many, the Uncertainty ſo great, the Encouragements ſo ſlender, the Examples for it ſo few, and when cloſely examined, ſo ſhort of the point; that I ſhould think that Man much more ingenuous and of a piece, that lives ill, and abſolutely diſavows any Thoughts of a Life to come; than Him, who profeſſes to entertain ſuch a Hope, and yet leaves

him-

himſelf nothing, but one ſuch deſperate puſh for it. To conclude all, (for I have been carried to an unuſual length) Nothing can ever be more abſurd, than the Principles of a Chriſtian and the Life of a Pagan; than to call our ſelves the Sons of God, and all the while be Servants to the Devil; to hope for Chriſt's coming again, and to do the Works he came before on purpoſe to deſtroy; to hope to be like God hereafter, and to make our ſelves as unlike him as may be in the mean while. To pretend, we wait and pant for that Likeneſs, as the complete Felicity of Humane Nature, and wilfully to obſtruct our own Happineſs, in ſuch Meaſures of it, as may be compaſs'd here; and are the only rational Evidences of deſiring the fullneſs of it hereafter. Theſe things can never ſtand together, never approve us to the Judgment of God or Man. No. Let us remember the End and Temper of the Chriſtian Faith, the Deſign of our great and precious Promiſes, and the Purpoſe of our Bleſſed Lord's cauſing himſelf and his Goſpel to ſhine upon us. Let our Thoughts, our Words, our every Action ſhew, we have duly conſidered that memorable Text of St. *Paul*, ſo nearly allied to the Offices of this Day: *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily, in this preſent world; looking for that bleſſed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

The only Application I ſhall make of this Diſcourſe is earneſtly to conjure every Chriſtian, that he would very ſeriouſly, very frequently, meditate upon theſe things. For, the more he does ſo, the more familiar they will be to him, the Belief of them more

firm

firm and lively, and the Value of them better underſtood. All which, how neceſſary and how uſeful it is, will eaſily appear by this One Obſervation. That no Man ever yet did an evil thing, knowingly and deliberately, but with a Propoſal of ſome Good from it. Now the impoſing upon Men, with falſe Opinions and falſe Eſtimates of the Ends they propound to themſelves, is the very Foundation of all the Wickedneſs in the World. And conſequently, the moſt effectual courſe to prevent, or give a check to Wickedneſs, is the ſetting Men right in their Judgments of the good and evil Conſequences of good and bad Actions. Were this Perſwaſion firmly rooted in their hearts; Were it, as it ought to be, always uppermoſt in their Thoughts, that a Future State certainly awaits us, that the Glories and Bliſſes of that State, even by what we do or may know of them already, are infinitely to be preferr'd before All this World can give us; and, that there are beſides, many and great Pleaſures, yet hidden from our Eyes, unutterable, unconceivable, both for their Worth and Number: Can it be ſuppoſed, that Men, who in earneſt believe, and actually remember, and duly weigh theſe things, could ever be ſeduced ſo eaſily, as we find they are, into Practices, which the Scripture declares the Enjoyment of theſe Bleſſings was never intended for? No, 'tis impoſſible. Men muſt lay aſide all pretence to Reaſon, if they can act at this rate. The Fact is far otherwiſe. God promiſes future and unſeen Advantages, as Motives to Virtue; The Devil baits with ſuch as are preſent and ſenſible indeed, but in no degree ſo valuable, as Allurements to Sin. Now theſe Latter could never prevail above the Former, were it not, that Men under Temptation are wanting to themſelves, either in the Vigour of their Faith, or in the Juſtneſs of their Computation, or in urging upon their Conſciences the Neceſ-

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ſity of the Condition. That is, They do not ſufficiently think, and convince themſelves of ſuch a State, but being out of ſight it is out of mind too; and for the Benefit of theſe I deſigned my *First* Head. Or elſe they do not reckon the Happineſs of the next World, to be ſo incomparably above all that they are flattered with in This: Which Errour the *Second* Head may help a little to correct. For this would rectifie Mens Notions, and ſhew, that to *ſee God as he is*, and to *be like him*, are not ſuch dry and taſteleſs things, as they ſo commonly happen to be thought; and, becauſe not better underſtood, are ſo often put, not only in competition with, but put behind, the Pleaſures of Sin and Senſe. Or, laſtly, they delude themſelves with groundleſs Imaginations, that notwithſtanding their Sins, they may come to Heaven at laſt; and for the Diſabuſing ſuch, my *Third* Head was neceſſary. So excellent a Preſervative hath S. *John* here furniſhed againſt Temptation, ſo impenetrable a Shield, able to repell all the fiery Darts of the Wicked; would we but weigh, and remember, and, by continual dwelling upon it, render that preſent to our Minds, which cannot yet be ſo to our Sight and Experience. In a word, The more our Thoughts are employed upon Heaven, and the deeper they plunge into the vaſt Ocean of Eternity, the more we ſhall anſwer our Character of God's Children, the nearer we ſhall approach to him here, by purifying our ſelves in the ſtrength of this Hope, even as he is pure: and the more certain we are to be like him hereafter, in his glorious Kingdom. Which He, of his infinite Mercy, grant we may, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. *Amen.*

The

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

The GOSPEL.

Matth. xxiv. 23.

23. *THen if any man ſhall ſay, Lo here is Chriſt, or there, believe it not.*

24. *For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that if it were poſſible they ſhall deceive the very Elect.*

25. *Behold, I have told you before.*

PARAPHRASE.

23. 24. 25. About the time of *Jeruſalem*'s final overthrow, many Seducers will ſet up, each pretending to be the Meſſiah, that Eminent Deliverer of the Jewiſh Nation ſo long foretold and expected. And theſe will prevail by the help of ſuch lying Wonders, as God for the Sins of Men will permit to be done by them: So that many ſhall be deceived, and none but the ſtedfaſt Chriſtians be able to hold out againſt them. But to fortify ſuch, it is that I give this timely Warning of theſe Men, and their Impoſtures. 2 *Theſſ.* ii.

26. *Wherefore if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold, he is in the deſart, go not forth. Behold, he is in the ſecret chambers, believe it not.*

27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the Eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the Weſt, ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of Man be.*

28. *For whereſoever the Carcaſe is, there will the Eagles be gathered together.*

26. 27. 28. Be not therefore led away by any vain promiſes of ſuch a Deliverer, to ſave you in this or that place of ſecurity, within or without the City; for the Coming of Chriſt, in vengeance upon the *Jews*, ſhall be ſudden, ſwift and terrible as a flaſh of Lightning. And the *Jews*, who are ſentenced to death, ſhall in every quarter be deſtroyed, as if the *Roman* Armies, whoſe Enſign is the Eagle, had the quality of that Bird, ſo ſagacious and greedy of prey, that dead Bodies, even at vaſt diſtance, cannot eſcape them.

29. *Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days, ſhall the Sun be darkned, and the Moon ſhall not give her light, and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens ſhall be ſhaken.*

30. *And then ſhall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then ſhall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn; and they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds, with Power and great Glory:*

31. *And he ſhall ſend his Angels, with a great ſound of Trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his Elect from the four Winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.*

29. 30. 31. [See Paraphraſe on *Luke* xxi. 25, *&c.* in Goſpel for II. Sund. in Advent.]

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

THE Subſtance of this Scripture is, in effect, the ſame with that already treated of, in the Goſpel for the *Second Sunday* in *Advent*. There is therefore no occaſion for enlarging any farther, either in the Deſcription, or the Proof, of a General Judgment. The Terrors of that Day are ſet forth here, by S. *Matthew*, in Terms of near affinity with thoſe in S. *Luke*. And, that ſuch Predictions, even in their literal and moſt dreadful ſignification, ſhall then be ſtrictly verified, S. *Peter* acquaints us, when declaring, that *the*

2 Pet. 3. 10. *Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the Earth alſo, and all the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.* In all which, to prevent our taking ſhelter in any Metaphors, or imaginary Hyperboles, he draws this Inference in the words next following.

Ver. 11, 12. *Seeing then, that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs? Looking for, and haſting to, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent heat.*

My Diſcourſe upon the Epiſtle for this Day, having carried me beyond the uſual Bounds; all I deſign here, is to make ſome farther Improvement of the Subject in hand, by a few practical Conſiderations, which the time would not permit me to mention, when handling it before.

The ſecond Sunday in Advent.

1. And *Firſt*, We ſhall do well, upon this occaſion, to obſerve the great Wiſdom and Goodneſs of our Bleſſed Maſter, in the Manner made Choice of for foretelling his laſt Coming. For, by drawing the Terrors of it ſo black, he hath taken the moſt probable

bable courſe to awaken Mens Conſciences, and put them upon ſhaking off ſpiritual Security and Sloth. And, from the Repreſentations given of it; As a thing, certain in it ſelf, and uncertain in the time, he hath cut off all wicked Excuſes, for unthinking Negligence, and dangerous Delays. Had thoſe tremendous Circumſtances been omitted, the Impreſſions upon our Minds muſt in all reaſon have proved leſs powerful. And, had its Diſtance been punctually determined, Men would have been apt to bear but very cold regard to an Event, which, though never ſo ſure, yet, they had the Comfort to know, was ſtill removed a very great way from them. But nothing can be ſtrong enough to ſcatter this Spiritual Lethargy, and quicken us into ſerious Piety, and effectual Preparation, for a Judgment, upon the iſſue whereof our All muſt turn at laſt, and we be fixed in Wo or Bliſs by it; If the Certainty, the Horrour, and the Suddenneſs, of ſuch a Judgment will not. Sure we know it is, and Terrible beyond all Imagination, and very nigh at hand it may be, for ought we do, or can, know. Nay, far off, we are certain, it cannot be, as it regards our own Death; The Condition whereof will in nothing differ from that poſture of Soul, in which the Great Day of Account will find us. What manner of Perſons then ought We to be indeed? how Holy, how Circumſpect? We, who call our ſelves Chriſtians, and profeſs, as ſuch, moſt firmly to believe this Coming of our Lord, as a Fundamental Article of our moſt holy Religion? St. *Paul* alledges in the Jews behalf, that *had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*; and yet if, that Ignorance of Theirs notwithſtanding, God poured out his Indignation upon that People, in Circumſtances ſo diſmal, that the Ears of all that hear it tingle, and the very reading their Story, even at this diſtance, chills and curdles

1 Cor. ii. 8.

curdles all our Blood; Of how much ſorer Puniſhment ſhall We be thought worthy, who have ſo ſevere an Example before our Eyes, and yet take no Warning by it? We, who profeſs to worſhip, and be Servants to *Jeſus*, and yet in Works diſhonour and do deſpight to him: We, who acknowledge his Glories, and call him the Son of God, but, as much as in us lies, crucifie and again expoſe him to Contempt? Is not this to call down upon our own Heads the utmoſt Torments that Day can inflict? Is it not to treaſure up to our ſelves Wrath againſt the ſeaſon of Wrath, and to render that Goſpel, given to preſerve, and fit us for Heaven, an Occaſion of our ſo much juſter Damnation, and of ſinking us ſo much deeper into Hell? All the abuſed Means of Grace, all the neglected Opportunities of Amendment, even theſe Admonitions will fly in our Faces, and upbraid the Obdurate and Improvident. And They, who have had all done, that could be done to them, may well call upon the Mountains to fall on them, and the Hills to cover them; when they ſhall ſink under the Load of a double Sentence, and be condemned, not only out of God's, but out of their own Mouths.

2. *Secondly*. Hence we may learn, how mean an Opinion is due to this World, and the Things of it. It hath been well obſerved by Philoſophers, that no Object of ſhort coutinuance, and ſubject to Corruption, can poſſibly be worthy the Deſires of a reaſonable and immortal Soul. And no Argument is more capable of inſpiring true Nobleneſs of Mind, than thoſe Chriſtian Revelations, which ſo poſitively threaten the utter Deſtruction of this whole material frame. When, not this droſſy Earth alone, but even thoſe purer Celeſtial Bodies, the Source of Light and Comfort to wretched Mortals, ſhall undergo the general Conflagration; Does not this

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argue, that what Excellencies ſoever we may fancy in them, yet He who gave them Being, and can be under no Miſtakes concerning them, ſees nothing there ſo valuable, as ſhould incline him to ſpare them from Ruin and Diſſolution.

But, beſides that unalterable Decree, that hath doomed theſe things to ceaſe in themſelves, there is another no leſs unavoidable, which brings them under a neceſſity of ceaſing to Us. For, How continually do we feel them periſh in the uſing? how often ſlip through our fingers, and leave us, at once bereaved of a Poſſeſſion we fondly thought fixed and certain, and aſtoniſh'd which way they came to do ſo? Suppoſing them, yet farther, to eſcape the common Methods of deceiving us in that point too, yet, how ſhort is our Stay with Them, if They were never ſo firmly diſpoſed to ſtay with Us? Death, 'tis beyond all doubt, muſt make an entire Separation: and This is in ſuch ſwift, ſuch conſtant Motion toward us, that every one hath ſo much leſs behind to enjoy the World in, as I have now been employing time to prepare him for the leaving it.

And Who, that is wiſe, would place his Affections and Happineſs in That, which may do it this very day? In That, which every moment cuts off a part from, Which often makes it ſelf Wings, and flies away from Him, and which He himſelf is flying from, as faſt as Time can carry him; flying from it, at the very inſtant, that he purſues, and careſſes, and ſettles his Heart upon it. How vain are ſuch fugitive Objects, in compariſon of a *certain and enduring Subſtance?* How miſerably infatuated thoſe unthinking Creatures, who allow ſuch Trifles, ſuch empty Bubbles, to over-balance a *Treaſure in Heaven, a Crown incorruptible, and that fadeth not away for ever? Oh that Men were wiſe, that they would underſtand this, that they would conſider their latter end!*

3. *Thirdly.* From the Two foregoing Reflections, 'tis eaſie to diſcern the Reaſonableneſs of thoſe Virtues, which are uſually thought ſo extremely hard of Digeſtion, Liberal Charity to the Poor, and Suffering for a Good Conſcience, when God calls us to it. The abridging our Selves even of ſuperfluous Expences and Pleaſures, but more of the common Comforts and Supplies of Humane Life, and eſpecially the Giving up All, even that Life it ſelf, for the ſake of Religion, are, by the Carnal, the Vain, the Worldly-minded, (that is, in truth, by much the greater part of Mankind) look'd upon as moſt extravagant Inſtances of Zeal, and, to ſpeak tenderly, a pious Madneſs. But, what Abſurdity ſoever Fleſh and Senſe may apprehend in This, the Goſpel ſets the matter in a quite different Light; and all the Hardſhip, that aſſaults us in it, is merely from a Forgetfulneſs of our Condition in the Preſent, and of our Proſpects and Hopes of the, Next World.

1. Suppoſe, as to the Former of theſe Caſes, the ſame Command laid upon Each of us, as on the Rich Young-man in the Goſpel; *Go, ſell that thou haſt, and give to the Poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in Heaven.* This may at firſt ſound like a hard Saying; but, if we will ſit down and weigh it nicely, what in truth does it amount to, more than this, that we ſhould do, what every conſidering Man would deſire, and eſteem himſelf happy in a fit opportunity to do? To make a Virtue of Neceſſity, and part with that by Choice, which we muſt otherwiſe part with by Conſtraint? That we would freely give back to Chriſt, what He firſt gave us; what is not in our Power always to keep; and for which, if this be done, he will give ſomewhat in exchange, better, and not liable ever to be taken away. Were theſe Earthly Poſſeſſions abſolutely at our own Will, the Joys of Heaven ſhould infinitely outweigh them. But, when

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the Queſtion is not, Whether we will hold them faſt, but, in what manner we will quit them; Whether a Fire, or a Tempeſt, Deceit or Violence, ſhall wreſt them from us, or whether we will convert them to generous and holy Uſes: Whether a profuſe Heir ſhall ſquander them away in Riot, and Luxury, and Folly; or, Whether we will profit our Selves of them, by feeding the Hungry, and clothing the Naked, Members of our Common Head: To diſpute this is to queſtion, whether Good or Evil, Loſs or Improvement, ought to be choſen. For this is a ſort of noble Avarice, thus to put Money out to Intereſt, and, with the periſhing Droſs of this World, to purchaſe an everlaſting Settlement in the Next.

2. Nor is the Caſe very different with regard to Suffering for Religion: Since here too the whole turns upon This, Whether we will dedicate to God a Life expoſed to Accidents innumerable, and perpetual Decay; and ſo, by a Free-will Offering make that parting with the World a Martyrdom, which muſt be a Death however; Or, whether we chooſe to prolong a Life, which every moment may put an end to, at the expence of a polluted Conſcience, and everlaſting Pains: Whether we will die like Chriſtians, and enter upon certain Happineſs to day; Or whether we will run the hazard of being unſpeakably and eternally miſerable, by taking up with a bare Poſſibility, (for 'tis but a Poſſibility) of living till to morrow.

But, God be thank'd, this, in Our Age, is ſeldom the Caſe. And therefore I have a farther Deſign in vindicating the Equity of Commands, which oblige, even when matters are come to an extremity. It is to put you in mind, how juſtly thoſe Men are condemn'd to Miſery hereafter, who refuſe to be happy upon much eaſier Terms. For, If it were Wiſdom even to leave all and follow Chriſt; how

ſenſeleſs, how ungrateful is it, not to allow him part of our Abundance, and give to Piety, what, if with-held, would only miniſter unto Vanity and Sin? If even Dying for Him, who hath already died for Us, cannot in ſtricteſt Reaſon be declined; how wretched, how wilful muſt their Condemnation be, who will not be perſwaded to live to Him; and devote their Bodies and Souls a holy Sacrifice, acceptable, and zealous in good Works?

Let us, my Brethren, conſider the glorious Hope, that is ſet before us, of being *like him*, and *ſeeing him as he is*: and let this effectually prevail with us *to purify our ſelves even as he is pure*; as knowing very well, that ſuch a reſemblance to him, in this preſent World, is the only poſſible way of attaining to be *made like him, when he ſhall appear, in his eternal and glorious Kingdom: where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghoſt, he liveth and reigneth ever one God World without end.* Amen.

The Sunday called Septuageſima; *Or, the Third Sunday before* Lent.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, we beſeech thee favourably to hear the Prayers of thy People, that We, who are juſtly puniſhed for our Offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy Goodneſs; for the Glory of thy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt, ever one God, World without end. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE. 1 Cor. ix. 24.

24. The Zeal I urge upon you, and expreſs in my own Practice, is no more, than

24. *KNow ye not, that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize? ſo run that ye may obtain.*

what ye *Corinthians* have frequent Inſtances of, upon much ſlenderer Encouragements. For in the *Iſthmian* Games, celebrated with you, all the Racers obſerve the Rules preſcribed them, and exert their utmoſt

utmoſt Vigour, though of all theſe but One gets what All aim at. Let theſe Men be your Pattern, and do you run your Chriſtian Race, with an Eagerneſs that ſtrives to be foremoſt, and would not be outdone by any engaged in the ſame Courſe.

25. *And every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.*

25. Again; Thoſe who contend, in thoſe Games, at Wreſtling and Cuffing, ſubmit to Diſcipline, debar themſelves many Liberties, and undergo great and long Hardſhips, to prepare them for the Combat. And if they are content to do and ſuffer ſo much for a Garland of Boughs, that quickly withers; ought not we to decline ſome Abridgments and Self-denyals, who expect to be rewarded with a Crown that fadeth not away?

26. *I therefore ſo run, not as uncertainly: ſo fight I, not as one that beateth the air:*

26. This is it which invigorates me, I know the Courſe I make, and keep my Goal in view: Like thoſe *Grecian* Runners. Nor do I only brandiſh my Arms in the Air, and act imaginary Conflicts:

27. *But I keep under my body and bring it into ſubjection, leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.*

27. But, like thoſe Wreſtlers and Cuffers, fight in very good earneſt with my Adverſaries; this Body of mine, its Appetites and Paſſions; and ſubdue them by Mortification and ſtrict Diſcipline. Leſt otherwiſe I, who (like the Herald in thoſe Games,) proclaim the Terms and the Rewards, to others, ſhould at length, through Sloth or irregular Behaviour, loſe all, and have the Prize given at laſt againſt my ſelf.

COMMENT.

THE better to diſcern our Apoſtle's true Scope in the Paſſage now before us, we ſhall do well to begin our Meditations upon it, with obſerving the Occaſion which introduced this Argument, and the Propriety of thoſe Alluſions, wherein the Force of it conſiſts.

1. For the Occaſion, *Firſt*, This ſeems to have been given, by theſe *Corinthians* having conſulted St. *Paul* about ſome Points of Chriſtian Liberty; Wherein he ſets himſelf to reſolve and direct them from the beginning of the *Seventh* Chapter. Among Others, That of eating Meats ſacrificed to Idols is

the moſt celebrated Caſe. Of this Practice, however innocent, when conſidered abſtractedly, he adviſes a Reſtraint; Not from a Principle of Duty, and private Conſcience, as a Thing neceſſary in it ſelf, or hurtful to Perſons rightly appriſed of the Matter: but upon Conſiderations of Prudence and Charity, and ſo far affecting the Conſcience of Chriſtians united in one Body; That they are obliged to forbear, whatſoever is apt to wound and offend their weak Brethren. The better to reconcile theſe *Corinthians* to ſuch Acts of Self-denyal, as they might think too rigorous to be impoſed, with regard to Things confeſſedly lawful in their own Nature: he backs his former Arguments, by mentioning in this Chapter ſeveral Condeſcenſions, which he in ſtrictneſs was not bound, but yet content to make, for the greater Credit and Recommendation of his Doctrine, and for the ſake of ſuch Advantages and Rewards, as he knew to be an abundant Compenſation for all he could do or ſuffer in ſo glorious a Cauſe. This drew him on to another Topick, which would ſtrengthen the Force of His Example by their Own. And, from the Inſtances they daily ſaw, of Men among themſelves ſubmitting to a great deal more, where the Benefits they aimed at from thence were in no degree ſo valuable; to incite their Zeal, and perſwade them to think nothing too much, when the Salvation of their own and their Fellow-Chriſtian's Souls was the Recompence promiſed and aſpired after.

2. To render his Repreſentation of this Matter as moving and lively as might be, the Apoſtle chooſes to expreſs himſelf, in Terms exceeding proper for the Perſons to whom he wrote. It was with Them, among other Parts of *Greece*, that thoſe Games ſo renowned in Story were celebrated. No Honour was more eagerly coveted, than that of excelling in theſe

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publick Exercises: One of which was Racing, Another compounded of Wrestling and Cuffing. In order to both these, a long Preparation of set Diet, Abstinence from some Pleasures, and several Hardships were prescribed and undergone: and in the Course and Combat it self much Sweat and Toil, many Hazards, sharp Conflicts, and sore Wounds and Bruises, were to be expected. And yet all these were submitted to with incredible Alacrity and Resolution. But for what? For an empty Name, for a Crown of Leaves; A Prize that was withering and worthless; A Prize contended for by Many, but to be won by One; and yet courted as industriously, as painfully, as if Each could, nay the more so, because All, it was known, could not, obtain it, but Each flattered himself, that he should be the single happy Man, to whom the Glory of the Field should be adjudged.

Since therefore it was a thing so common, so creditable, among the People of *Corinth*, to exert themselves so vigorously, upon so very poor, so very uncertain Prospects, why should they decline the like Diligence and Zeal, where the Prize they aim at is so much nobler and surer? Why think it hard to obey the Rules, and contain themselves within the Limits mark'd out for their Christian Course? Why not follow the Pattern of their great Apostle, by keeping the Goal in view, by striving with all their Might to be foremost in this Spiritual Race; by fighting, like Him, in very good earnest, and with some Violence, bringing and keeping under an Adversary, as dangerous and difficult to be subdued, as any they could possibly encounter in the *Isthmian* Games; even that Body, those Sensual Appetites and Passions, which St. *Paul* himself found it needful to treat so roughly, lest the Master of the Exercise, and Judge of the Prize, Vers. 27.

ſhould at laſt reject him as unworthy to be crowned, for any undue Indulgencies to his own Inclinations, or for Irregularities or Sloth in a Matter of ſuch vaſt importance?

My Endeavour, upon this Occaſion, muſt be to quicken Men in the Purſuit of their Heavenly Reward. And that (1.) by enforcing the Apoſtle's Argument, which repreſents the Excellency of it, And (2.) by recommending the Methods he both practiſed and preſcribed for the obtaining of it. Under each of which Heads, I ſhall follow the Pattern and Compariſon here before us; and, from the very great Induſtry, employed about Matters of leſs moment, endeavour to expoſe the Folly and Abſurdity of being careleſs and indifferent, in thoſe of infinitely greater.

The Motives taken from the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe here may be Two: The Value of the Crown, and The Poſſibility of obtaining it. And a little Reflection upon Each might ſuffice for the anſwering his Purpoſe, did Men but bring along with them a Diſpoſition, to let any Arguments in this Cauſe have their full Force upon them.

(1.) The Compariſon here lies between One Crown and Another: Both looked upon, as an ample Recompence for the Pains taken to obtain them. But with this difference, that, in reality, the Value of the One is imaginary, and depends upon common Eſtimation only; That of the Other is intrinſick and ſubſtantial; and this commonly rated as much lower, as the former is higher, than it deſerves to be. And that, as upon other Accounts, ſo particularly, becauſe admitting, (in compliance with the miſtaken Notions of the World) that each is a Good, yet, when taken at the very beſt, it is evident, the One can be but a ſhort and periſhing, whereas the Other is a fixed and laſting Good: The One *a Corruptible*, the Other *an Incorruptible* Crown. Of

Of the former, the corruptible Sort, are plainly all thoſe Advantages of the preſent World, for which Mankind ſo eagerly contend. They are fickle and fugitive; Not only allayed by infinite Abatements, which check our Delights, and diſturb our Enjoyment, while we continue in Poſſeſſion of them; Not only expoſed to infinite Accidents, which ſeldom ſuffer that Poſſeſſion to be quiet, and are perpetually conſpiring to deprive us of them: But, like thoſe Garlands alluded to by St. *Paul*, which wither of themſelves, they are, in their own Nature, fading, and ſuch as it is not poſſible for the utmoſt Art and Care to preſerve.

To ſpend Time in proving this, by deſcending to Particulars, is needleſs, when Experience and Common Senſe have done it to our Hands. For, I appeal to any Man alive, whether this be not the Caſe of all thoſe moſt envied Privileges and Conveniences, wherein Men are at ſo much trouble to excel one another. Whether the Honour and Applauſe, acquired by the nobleſt and moſt hazardous Atchievements, be not like that of the *Olympick* Games, the Subject of Diſcourſe and Admiration for a while; but eclipſed by the next fortunate Gainer of the Prize, and ſhortly after neglected and forgotten. Whether They, who ſacrifice all to Pleaſure, do not feel, that this is loſt by indulging; that, to render it exquiſite is the ready way to ſhorten it; and that every Exceſs naturally deſtroys and turns it into Pain. And laſtly, Whether the wiſe Man have not moſt emphatically ſaid of Riches, That *they make themſelves Wings and fly away*; ſince uſed they cannot be, without diminiſhing, and, if not uſed, they are juſt good for nothing.

Theſe are the Prizes, for which we ſee ſo much Clutter and Struggle in the World; That Men think all the Expence and Hardſhips, of long Inſtruction,

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and ſevere Education in Youth; All the Toil and Danger of a ripe and vigorous Age, Laborious Days and reſtleſs Nights, Compaſſings of Sea and Land, The Caprices of Courts, The Fatigues of Camps, The Tryal of every Element and Climate, In a word, Eaſe, and Safety, and Health, and Peace of Mind, and Life, and too often Conſcience and Soul it ſelf, wiſely ſacrificed to, and laid out upon, Things, which have indeed their Comforts and Conveniences, when ſought and uſed in due Place and Proportion, but, when purſued and loved inordinately, they deſtroy the very purpoſes they ſhould ſerve. They are therefore moſt improper to be made the Chief Aim and End of Living, and altogether unworthy even a ſmall part of that, which the generality of People are content to do and ſuffer for them.

And yet I will venture to ſay on this Occaſion, It were ſtill more tolerable, if only the Things already mentioned, engaged our Affections and Endeavours to ſo violent a degree. But, to the ſtill greater Reproach of Mankind, the Folly extends farther: And frequent Inſtances are to be found, where no Pains, or Time, or Coſt, or Danger is grudged, for Things perfectly frivolous, manifeſtly ſuperfluous. To enflame a Paſſion fitter to be check'd and ſubdued; Or to carry on a Humour, as unaccountable and extravagant, as the Trouble we are at to ſooth it; Or to gratify a Curioſity, as fruitleſs, as it was hard to be contented. So abſolute a Dominion do even the moſt trifling Objects gain over us, when we let our Appetites looſe upon the World; and are governed, in the Eſtimates we make of them, not by Judgment, but by Inclination.

(2.) Still there is one Diſcouragement behind, which, added to the Reſt, ſhould, it might reaſonably be imagined, damp the Vehemence of theſe Purſuits.

ſuits. 'Tis not the Difficulty only, but the great Uncertainty, of compaſſing the Prize they aim at. For thus the numberleſs Diſappointments of Mens Expectations demonſtrate that it is. And thus our own Reaſon will tell us it muſt needs be; Where the Advantage aimed at hath many Seekers; Where there is not enough in the Thing ſought to ſatisfie All; Where, of thoſe Pretenders, the Gain of One muſt be the Loſs of Another: And conſequently, Where every Candidate finds it neceſſary for his Intereſt, to out-ſtrip or otherwiſe hinder every other Body from making good Their point, in order to ſecuring and carrying his Own.

Such is the Condition even of the Beſt of thoſe Things, which we can ſuppoſe the *Corruptible Crown*, in this Scripture, capable of being applied to. The Riches, the Honours, and the Pleaſures of this Life. The Happineſs and Rewards of Another, manifeſtly intended by the *Incorruptible Crown*, are what ſome of my former Diſcourſes have rendred needleſs to endeavour, and their inconceivable Excellence makes it impoſſible to give, a full or worthy Repreſentation of. Let it ſuffice therefore at preſent to obſerve, that the Apoſtle ſets Theſe in direct oppoſition to, and that they are, in every Particular already touched upon, juſt the Reverſe of the other. A Crown indeed; As that denotes the higheſt Honour, the greateſt Affluence, the firmeſt Security: The only Crown, whoſe Splendour does not dedeive with falſe Ideas; as having no weight of Cares to make it burdenſom, no Dangers to allay its Glory; but all bright, and maſſive, and ſtable.

This Crown, beſides its own Value, is the more worth our ſtriving for, becauſe not, like all others, peculiar to ſome One, excluſive of the reſt who contend for, and aſpire after it: but capable of being attained by every one that ſeeks it; ſufficient to anſwer

ſwer, nay infinitely to exceed, the largeſt Wiſhes and Expectations of them all; and ſo far from leſſening the Fruition to our ſelves, by having Partners in the Bliſs; that, as no ſingle Perſon's Endeavours ſhall ſuffer Diſappointment, who ſeeks it regularly, ſo the more zealouſly each labours to promote the Happineſs of his Brethren, the more effectually he eſtabliſhes, and the larger Addition he thereby makes to, his Own. And this is a Happineſs, not only exquiſite in Degree, and in its Nature pure, and ſatisfactory, and truly excellent; but, for its Duration, everlaſting, always growing, always freſh; liable to no interruption, no abatement, no decay; a Joy that no Man can, a Joy that God, who gives, never will, take from us.

Suppoſing therefore, that the Enjoyments of this World really had, as alas! they are very far from having, all that we fondly fancy to be in them; yet even ſo, 'tis plain, this ought to have the Preference in our Eſteem and Endeavours. And it is not eaſie to think of a more powerful Incitement, to quicken our Purſuits after Heavenly Things, than the putting us in mind, how we uſually behave our ſelves, when we have earthly Advantages in view. For, What excuſe can be found for that Folly, which overlooks and ſlights a Treaſure certainly attainable, real, and perfect, and ever enduring; and lays out the whole of our Time and Pains, upon Shadows and Bubbles, Things in compariſon empty and imaginary, often ſought in vain, deceitful when found, not worth our keeping when we have them, and not poſſible to be kept long, though we would never ſo fain?

Would Men but allow themſelves to think at all, and to act as becomes their Character, they muſt needs be made ſenſible, what difference there is, between theſe two Objects of their Deſires and Labours;

Such

Such Men, I mean, as St. *Paul* was heretofore, and I ought to presume my self now, treating with; Christians, who stedfastly believe the Gospel, and therefore can be under no reasonable Doubt, concerning either the Certainty, or the Excellency, of the Prize, which God hath prepared for them that love, and seek it in the manner he hath directed. And what that manner is, we shall find no great difficulty to learn, if we will but attend to the Methods the Apostle here prescribes, and declares himself to have practised upon this Occasion. Which therefore I proposed for my *Second* Head of Discourse.

Now, *First*, By comparing the Christian's Duty to a *Race*, the Apostle, no doubt, intended to insinuate, what Vigour, *first*, what Regularity, *next*, what Perseverance, *lastly*, is expected from us. The Crown here aimed at is like those of the *Olympick* Games in this respect, that it is bestowed in the quality of a Reward; A Distinction to those who have signalized themselves by performing the known Conditions of obtaining it: And a Reward too, that supposes all who seek it, to understand it a Compensation sufficient, for all the Toil and Hardship such Conditions are known to engage them in. In this Perswasion is founded the Encouragement to our undertaking the Course. A Persuasion, that would naturally banish Indifference and Carelessness, by the glorious Prospect of the End we have in view; and represents all Sloth, as certain to be, not only unsuccessful, but extremely foolish and scandalous. And, in regard the Prize is given by the Master of the Race, this shews us the Equity of our submitting to His Terms, the necessity of running in the Way He hath chalked out for us, and not making to our selves Paths of our own devising. For here too, it is not the Swiftness of the Motion alone, but keeping to the true Ground, that must make us Winners at last.

Once

Once more, This Reſemblance teaches us the Obligation we are under to hold on our Courſe with Reſolution; ſince nothing leſs than coming up to the Goal can crown our Endeavours; and He that gives out, or is beaten off, at the Laſt Heat, loſes the Benefit of all his Labours and Succeſſes in the Former, as effectually, as if he had never put in for the Prize at all.

1. How happy would it be for us, if the Importance of this Metaphor were conſidered, as it ought to be? Men would not then (in the Prophet *Iſaiah*'s Expreſſion) *ſpend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not.* They would not make Religion a thing by the by, and allow it ſo few, ſo very few, even of their leiſure hours; ſo many fewer, than they give even to the Diverſions and Impertinencies of the World. They would not ſuffer the Pains and Expence they are content to be at upon the Occaſions, nay upon the Vanities, of Life, ſo greatly to exceed thoſe poor droppings, which are ſo hardly extorted from an overgrown Treaſure to Works of Piety and Charity. In a word, They would not appear ſo extremely ſollicitous about Trifles, ſo prudent Managers in Affairs of little conſequence, and ſo wretchedly cold and careleſs, ſtupid and unthinking, in their Main, their Eternal, their Only Concern. For, did they reflect at all, their own Example would reproach them into better ſence; their very Pleaſures would awaken a remembrance of their Duty; and every Race expoſe the abſurdity, of exerting all their Powers to win a poor deſpicable Prize, and of ſitting ſtill with their hands folded, when engaged in a Courſe, whoſe End and Prize is an immortal Crown of Glory.

2. Well were it likewiſe, if Men attended to this Figure, ſo as to convince themſelves, that it is the

Maſter's

Maſter's and Judge's part to preſcribe, and the Runner's to ſubmit and comply with, the Rules of the Race. For, from want of ſuch Reflection it is, no doubt, that the face of the Chriſtian World is ſo deformed with pernicious Errors, wild Enthuſiaſms, and frivolous Superſtitions: that the Religion of ſo many is compounded of monſtrous Abſurdities, ſuited to each Perſon's Complexion, or Paſſion, or Humour, or Intereſt: that Scripture is diſtorted and racked, to make it ſpeak the ſence of private Spirits, or of differing Parties: and, that the Belief and Practice of ſo many, (who falſly pretend to be framed upon one common Model, while they indeed are at as wide a diſtance, as the Fancies they ſpring out of, or the Conveniencies they ſerve) are no longer the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, but the Dictates of daring Wretches, who preſume to pervert it; for the ſincere Milk of the Word, obtruding the poyſon of falſe Gloſſes; And who do not build up the Temple of the Lord, but erect new Schemes, and ſet them upon ſandy Foundations of their own.

3. But eſpecially, Well it were, if a remembrance of our Life being a Race would encourage the Stedfaſtneſs and Perſeverance, even of thoſe, who have in good meaſure eſcaped the Pollutions of the World, detected the *cunning craftineſs of Them who lie in wait to deceive*, and have begun to run well. For, how Many of Them, who ſet out moſt commendably, do feel, (how few indeed do not feel) their Zeal by degrees languiſh and grow cold; and, though hot at hand, yet quickly abate of their Speed in this Spiritual Race. There is therefore great occaſion for keeping up our Reſolution and Vigour, by remembring, that nothing leſs than running the whole Courſe can entitle us to the Prize: Great need, often to take our ſelves aſide, and ſee what Progreſs we have made, and whereabouts we are: what length

of

of the Field there is ſtill before us, and how ſhort a time is left us to compaſs it in. This is an Enquiry very fit to be frequently and diligently made, eſpecially at each of our Approaches to the Bleſſed Table: at all ſolemn Seaſons of Humiliation and Repentance: (and conſequently very proper to be recommended now, as a good Introduction to the *Lent*-Faſt.) That ſo, upon every freſh Examination, the State of our Souls may, be diſtinctly known; And that, when this is rightly underſtood, ſuch Knowledge may produce its due Effect. That, if we have, (as alas! Who hath not?) ſtood ſtill, or loitered, or loſt Ground, we may quicken our Pace, and fetch it up before it be too late: Or, if we find our ſelves moving forward, that the nearer we approach, the more we may exert our Strength: and not by rough Ways, dead Hearts, and feeble Knees, by *fainting* and *growing weary in well-doing*, not only loſe our Crown, but have the Calamity of that Loſs doubled to us, by diſappointing all our paſt Hopes and Toil, and miſſing the Prize, to our Shame and eternal Confuſion; when we were juſt in ſight, and might, by bearing up but a little longer, certainly have ſecured the Bliſs and Honour of it. Of ſo uſeful, ſo neceſſary Conſequence, is this Alluſion to us; And of ſo much concern, to conſider every Chriſtian in this Life, as one engaged in a Race; To reflect, what Value each of us runs for, and how he ought to acquit himſelf in the glorious Undertakeing.

2. The other Alluſion of St. *Paul*, in this Scripture, to the Wreſtling and Cuffing in the Games celebrated among theſe *Corinthians*, reſembles the Chriſtian's Duty to a Fight; and This is likewiſe a Direction in ſeveral Inſtances, particularly in theſe that follow.

(1.) This

(1.) This is a farther Incitement to our Zeal, as it represents to us the Opposition we are like to meet with in our great Affair. The former Similitude supposes every Competitor for the Prize obliged to make the best of his way; but the Present intimates a danger, not only of being out-stripp'd by the more vigorous Endeavours of Others, but of encountring great Difficulties and Obstructions in our Own. And therefore it calls upon us to prepare for a Combat; the Nature whereof when we rightly understand, it will plainly appear to be such, as we can neither decline, nor behave our selves negligently in, without suffering the utmost Damage and Dishonour.

For (2.) This Combat is here resembled to those of the *Olympick* Games, where Men contended, not out of hatred, or with an intent to destroy, but for a Prize, and with design to master, their Adversary. That Adversary, in the case before us, is by St. *Paul*, Verse 27. said to be the *Body*, that is, the Sensual and Carnal Appetites, which are ever putting us upon endeavouring after, placing our Affections upon, and esteeming our chief Happiness to consist in, the Gratifications of Sense, and Enjoyments of the present World. And this is reputed an Adversary, because it wars against our Spiritual Part, diverts our Pursuit of purer and more lasting Joys, renders us careless of our main Concern, that future State where alone complete Happiness is to be had. And, the more we indulge the Suggestions of this Part, the farther we swerve from the Principles of Reason and Religion. Yet still this is a part of us; God hath implanted those Desires in our Nature for excellent Purposes, he continues them there for a constant Exercise of our Virtue; And therefore, though the Body be an Adversary, yet it is not such a one, as must be hated or slain, but only *kept under* and *brought into subjection*. These Passions and Affections then it is not

the buſineſs of Religion utterly to root out, but only, by prudent Reſtraints and proper Acts of Self-denial, to govern, and reduce, and contain within due Meaſures: that ſo They, upon all Occaſions, may obey, and the nobler Faculties of our Mind may rule and ſet Bounds to them.

(3.) That theſe Self-denials may not be miſunderſtood, as commands tyrannical and unreaſonably ſevere, we ſhall do well once more to caſt our Eye upon the Alluſion made uſe of by the Apoſtle. Who at *Verſe* 25. compares them to the Temperance, preſcribed and practiſed by way of preparation for the *Olympick* Games. The Obſervance whereof contributed to Mens Activity and Vigour, and more ſucceſsful Performance, in the parts they undertook, and deſired to ſignalize themſelves by. This is directly Our Caſe. God does not tye us up with Arbitrary Laws to unnatural Cruelties, that ſhould make Life a Burden; but commands us to maintain ſuch a Conflict, as the Condition of Humane Nature hath made unavoidable; and in it to ſubdue ſuch Deſires, and deny our ſelves ſuch Gratifications only, as, when freely indulged, are prejudicial, and obſtruct the great End and true Happineſs of Humane Nature. Such as are below the Dignity, and diſturb the Operations, and enervate the nobleſt Powers, of a reaſonable Mind; and therefore ought to be curbed by us, as Men. But eſpecially, ſuch as are inconſiſtent with the ſtrict Sobriety and Purity, with the generous Charity, and heavenly Mindedneſs of Chriſtians. Who, as ſuch, ſhould, in their whole Behaviour, keep up the diſtinction between a periſhing Body and an immortal Soul; and reckon all below but Droſs and Dung in compariſon, no farther worth their care, than as it may be ſerviceable to them in obtaining, but not by any means fit to come in competition with, or ſuffered to divert them from, or hinder

them

them in their Endeavours after, their incorruptible Crown of Glory.

Since then the Reward we have in view is ſo excellent, if the Terms of attaining it were yet much more difficult, we could not be juſt to our own Intereſt, ſhould we refuſe to comply with them. But then, ſince thoſe very Terms are for our Intereſt, how inexcuſable are thoſe wretched Men, who will not ſubmit to the Methods of being as happy, as they can be here, in order to being infinitely happy hereafter? The Combat I have been treating of, every Man is called to; And every Man, if the fault be not his own, may prove victorious in it. That Paſſage before us of *One obtaining the Prize*, is not intended by St. *Paul* to leſſen our Hopes, but to encourage our Labours; and meant to teach us, that the utmoſt we are able to do is little enough, that the Benefit we aim at will recompence all our Pains, and, that each Perſon upon that account ſhould exert himſelf as vigorouſly, and be as careful not to be outdone by any other, as if only the One beſt in the whole Number could win the Prize that All are ſtriving for. Let us then (and God grant we may) put forth our whole Strength, fix our Minds upon this Crown, and be continually preſſing forward to it. Let us not ſuffer our Thoughts to be diſſipated by Impertinence or Vanity; by any of the Follies or the Trifles, which upon pretence of entertaining, would looſen them, and break their Force, in this moſt neceſſary, as well as moſt important Affair. For we are not ſo much as at liberty to engage in, or to ſtand clear of, this Race and Combat. Were the Choice left to Us, yet not to come in were to be undone. But that was happily made for us long ago; we ſet out in this Courſe, and were liſted in this Service at our Baptiſm, and cannot retract without Deſertion and Apoſtacy. The greater Reaſon is there, why,

having gone ſo far already, we ſhould by all means diſengage our ſelves, from the weight of our ſenſual and corrupt Affections; mortifying them by the Abſtinence and other Holy Severities proper for that Seaſon of Humiliation and Faſting, to which this Portion of Scripture is ſo wiſely propounded, by our Admirable Church, as a ſeaſonable Preparation. And *laſtly*, Let not any of Us preſume to think thoſe Remedies a Diſpenſation below us, to which St. *Paul* himſelf did not diſdain to have recourſe. For if He, who was *caught up into* the Third Heaven, favoured with extraordinary Viſions and Revelations above the power of Humane Tongue to utter, entruſted with the Converſion of ſo many Nations, and indefatigably laborious in that Miniſtry; If He, notwithſtanding all theſe Virtues and Advantages, found it neceſſary to *keep under his Body*, and *bring it into ſubjection*; If He ſaw reaſon to fear, that otherwiſe He *after having preached to others, ſhould himſelf be a Caſt-away*; what care can be too great for Us, whoſe Attainments and Zeal are ſo much leſs? And how can we anſwer it to God, or to our own Souls, if we ſo far forget our own Sinfulneſs and Frailty, as not readily to ſubmit to every Method, of forwarding us in the Race that is ſet before us, and make not a diligent and thankful uſe of every advantage and defence in this War of the Spirit againſt the Fleſh? For ſure we ought to eſteem it a moſt happy thing, if by all poſſible means we can at laſt arrive to that unſpeakable Bleſſing, of having *our whole Spirit, and Soul and Body, preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and be in that great Day *mercifully delivered by His Goodneſs*: Which He of his infinite Mercy grant we may; To whom be Glory and Honour, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Verſe 27.

1 Theſſ. v. 23.

Collect for the Day.

Septuageſima,

Septuagesima; *or, the Third Sunday before* Lent.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. xx.

1. *THE Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.*

2. *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. 2. The method made uſe by God in diſtributing the Advantages of his Bleſſed Goſpel may be not unfitly reſembled, by that of an Houſholder calling in Workmen, and contracting with them according as they were to be met with, at their uſual place of Standing, at different Hours of the Day. Some preſently after Sun-riſing;

3. *And he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the market place,*

4. *And ſaid unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way.*

3. 4. Others at nine of the Clock, when the ſecond of theſe four Watches, into which the Jews uſually divide their day, begins.

5. *Again he went out about the ſixth and ninth hour, and did likewiſe.*

5. Others again, at twelve, and three in the Afternoon, the Jews third and fourth Watch.

6. *And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others ſtanding idle, and ſaith unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle?*

6. And Others ſtill at five, an hour before Sun-ſet, and the time of leaving work.

7. *They ſay unto him, Becauſe no man hath hired us. He ſaith unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right that ſhall ye receive.*

8. *So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard ſaith unto his Steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt.*

9. *And when they came, that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.*

10. *But when the firſt came, they ſuppoſed that they ſhould have received more, and they likewiſe received every man a penny.*

11. *And when they had received it, they murmured againſt the good man of the houſe,*

12. *Saying, These laſt have wrought but one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have born the burden and heat of the day.*

13. *But he anſwered one of them, and ſaid, Friend, I do thee no wrong, didſt thou not agree with me for a penny?*

14. 15. Thou haſt had thy Bargain, and ſo no reaſon to complain, thou oughteſt not to trouble thy ſelf how I deal with Others.

14. *Take that thine is, and go thy way, I will give unto this laſt even as unto thee.*

15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil becauſe I am good?*

Nor am I bound to give thee an account, who doſt very ill to envy the good Fortune of thy Brethren, and think much at my Bounty to them.

16. Thus it ſhall be in the Goſpel Benefits too; Becauſe the Number of them to whom the Advantages and Opportunities of Salvation are offered, is great; but that of the Men, who anſwer and make the beſt of them, is, in compariſon of the former, very ſmall.

16. *So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt, for many be called but few choſen.*

COMMENT.

MAny wiſe Reaſons (particularly that of inſinuating neceſſary but unwelcome Truths, in a manner as inoffenſive as might be) moved our Bleſſed Lord to ſpeak ſo much in Parables. But, to help our Underſtandings in the ſtudied Ambiguity of ſuch Figurative Speeches, he frequently applies or concludes them with ſome Figurative Sentence, which may ſerve as a Key to their Meaning and main Deſign. Thus it is here. *The firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt*, is an Aphoriſm at the end of the Chapter foregoing, intended to be illuſtrated by this Parable, and repeated again in the Cloſe at the 16th Verſe, with an expreſs direction how to interpret the Paſſages leading to it; *So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt.*

In order therefore to know, what Caſes and Doctrines are referred to by this Alluſion, it may be of ſome uſe, to conſider the places where this Sentence occurs,

occurs, and the Occaſions upon which it is introduced: The rather, becauſe, being but few, they will neither employ us long, nor endanger any confuſion in the Application.

In the xiii^th of St. *Luke*, verſe 30. It follows a Prediction concerning the Excluſion of the *Jews* for their Obſtinacy, and the vaſt and happy Confluence of the *Gentiles* into Chriſt's Church. That They, whoſe Anceſtors were Patriarchs and Prophets, ſhould be ſhut out from their Glories, and Strangers from every Quarter admitted to partake with thoſe Good Men in Honour and Bliſs. But then the 24th and 25th Verſes make it plain, that this Excluſion of the *Jews* was not an Act or Decree purely Arbitrary; but inflicted as a Puniſhment for their Wilfulneſs and Pride; and becauſe they did not think it worth their Pains, to enter in at the *Strait Gate*, now made the only Inlet to the Regions of the Bleſſed. On the other hand, the Promotion of the *Gentiles* is, in this, and other Scriptures, mentioned, as the Conſequence of Their eager and indefatigable Zeal. A Zeal, expreſs'd by *coming from far*, by *preſſing into the kingdom of heaven, by being violent*, and *taking it by force*. Now in this regard, the *Jews*, who were *firſt*, (ſuperiour in Privileges, and earlier in the Tenders of Happineſs) came to be *laſt*; failed, and fell ſhort of it;) And the *Gentiles*, who were *laſt*, in Opportunities and common Eſteem, became *firſt* in Succeſs; were forwarder in their Duty, and greedily embraced thoſe Benefits, which the Other deſpiſed and ſuffered to go beſide them, when every thing ſeemed to favour their Pretenſions, and promiſe a certain Poſſeſſion.

Verſe 29. Matt. viii. 11. —ix. 12. Luke xvi. 16.

In the Nineteenth of this Goſpel, the Tenth of St. *Mark*, (parallel to it) and the Cloſe of the Parable now before us;

Matt. xix. 30. Mark x. 31. Matt. xx. 16.

The Words ſeem not ſo much to concern Thoſe, who abſolutely loſt what they ſeem'd in better Condition to attain; and Others, who, from a State in appearance deſperate, became Happy; As to ſtate the Compariſon between Perſons, who all of them obtain a Recompence, though it be awarded to each in different and very ſurpriſing Meaſures. Thus the Labourers here all received Wages; ſome indeed more, ſome leſs, than was expected: But, which was ſtrange, They, whoſe Fatigue had been longer, were paid no more, than Others, whoſe Time had been ſhorteſt. Now, ſince the Perſon, whoſe Image that Houſholder bears, is Judge of all the Earth, and cannot but do right; Since He is infinitely above all unaccountable Likings and partial Fondneſs, (as is evident from His ſo frequent and ſolemn Declarations, That he *is no Reſpecter* of Perſons) we have leave at leaſt, nay, I take it, we ought, to conclude, that ſome very wiſe and juſt Conſiderations moved him to proceed thus with theſe ſeveral ſorts of Workmen. Reaſons perfectly well underſtood by their Maſter himſelf, though their Fellow-Labourers either did not comprehend, or would not attend to them. And ſo, in this ſecond Senſe, Not with regard to being miſerable, or being happy, but in regard of a Happineſs greater or leſs than was expected, and in proportion to the time of working being more or leſs; *There are many that are firſt which ſhall be laſt, and the laſt which ſhall be firſt.*

Chap. xix. 30.

From theſe Paſſages thus compared, we have, I think, ſufficient warrant to apply this Parable, *Firſt*, To the Caſe of all Mankind, or elſe, *Secondly*, To That of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in general; or, *Thirdly*, To That of private Chriſtians in particular. I ſhall ſtate each as briefly as I can, and then conclude with ſome proper Obſervations from them.

I. Take

1. Take it in its firſt and moſt comprehenſive Senſe, and thus it intimates, That God was never in any Age wanting to Mankind, that He (as hath * been formerly obſerved) did frequently renew his Call, and enlarge the Diſcoveries of His Will, and Their Duty, by ſuch Diſpenſations, as anſwer to the ſeveral Hours here; But that the Goſpel is his Laſt Call; and after this nothing is to be looked for, but the bringing Men to account, how they have acquitted themſelves under their reſpective Circumſtances.

* *Epiſtle for Chriſtmaſs Day.*

Next. Let us view that of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in general. To the *Jews* God was pleaſed to make the firſt expreſs Diſcoveries of his Will by a written Law; Their Nation alone, in the Ages before the Goſpel, were bleſſed with a Revealed Religion; And, at the firſt Publication of the Goſpel, our Lord confined his own Preſence and Miniſtry to this People and Country. So did his Apoſtles and Diſciples, by his direction, during his Abode upon Earth, and for ſome time after his Aſcenſion into Heaven. The ſeveral Steps taken in this Affair, during that Interval, may be thought anſwerable to the repeated Invitations of the *Morning*, the *Third*, the *Sixth*, and the *Ninth* Hours. At laſt, which anſwers to the *Eleventh*, this Benefit was extended to the *Gentiles*. They readily accepted it; and by ſo doing, became Partakers of the ſame Grace and precious Promiſes, with thoſe who had all along been brought up under the Legal, and from that removed ſooner under the Evangelical, Diſpenſation. This gave great Offence to thoſe earlier Converts, who thought themſelves ill dealt with, and their Services not ſufficiently conſidered, when Men, from Darkneſs and Idolatry, were at once tranſlated into the ſame marvellous Light; and all that diſtinction of Favour taken away,

which

which had been the boasted Prerogative of their Race, for so many Generations, and kept up, at the expence of a Law very rigorous and burdensome. All this in Fact appears from Holy Writ. So that there is scarce any Circumstance in the Parable, to which their Condition and Behaviour did not sute: and it must be confessed, that no Interpretation comes so strictly and literally home to it, as This.

But then we may be allowed, from the Occasion of this Parable, set down at large in the Chapter last before, to apply it to particular Christians too, in some, or in almost all the following Respects.

As the Apostles left all and followed Christ; As the Primitive Christians gave in their Names to his Doctrine, and continued stedfast in it, at the certain Peril of their Liberties, their Friendships, their Fortunes, nay their Lives. And yet, in any after Ages of Christianity, They who live and die, though quietly and peaceably, in the sincere Profession of this Religion, are promised the Kingdom of Heaven, as a Reward for their Faith and Obedience.

So again, Some have the Happiness of a pious Education, and carry on their early Virtue through the several Stages of Life; Others, who either wanted that Advantage, or have neglected to improve it, run into the same Excess of Riot with the unthinking part of the World: And yet if these, though late, see their Follies, and effectually forsake them, and become new Men, the Promise of God standeth sure,

Ezek. xviii. 26. That *at what time soever the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

Thus, once more, Some are continued to a good old Age, and by variety of Tryals, and a long course of Obedience, bring glory to God. Others Hearts are good, and equally disposed to do so, but, being

taken ſhort, and ſnatched out the World betimes, they are denyed Opportunities for it. And Both ſhall come to Heaven; The mention of which caſe, if it ſeem foreign to the Matter in hand, I deſire it may be remembred, that as the Aphoriſm (*Many that are firſt*, &c.) is thought to have been proverbial among the *Jews*; So have they another expreſly to this purpoſe, That He, who lives well, and is cut off in the midſt of his Days, (continues but half the Time ſet out for the Age of Man) ſhall be equally rewarded with Him, who lives ſeventy Years, or the utmoſt Term allotted for Man's Life. Capell *in loc.*

If againſt theſe Caſes it ſhall be objected, that ſome Paſſages in the Parable, particularly that of the murmuring Labourers, cannot agree with our expounding it of the Rewards, and therefore we muſt reſtrain it to the Knowledge and firſt Admiſſion to the Privileges, of the Goſpel: The Reply may be, That, to juſtify the Application of a Parable, it ſuffices, that the main Deſign be kept cloſe to; That many Paſſages are inſerted for Ornament and Illuſtration only; That This, in particular, may mean a Reward ſo ſurpriſingly great, as among Men would provoke the Envy of Others; And, that the Connexion between this and the Nineteenth Chapter ſeems to import ſome other meaning, beſides that of bringing the *Gentile* Converts upon the ſame level with the Jewiſh; As I ſhall have occaſion hereafter more fully to explain. *Goſpel for St. Paul's Converſion.*

Having thus done with propounding the ſeveral Caſes, to which the Scripture before us may be accommodated; it only remains, that I raiſe from it ſuch uſeful Obſervations, as may anſwer the Deſign of our excellent Church, in recommending it to our Thoughts at this time.

And

And, *First*, We are, upon this Occaſion more eſpecially, obliged to take notice of the Kindneſs of this Houſholder, in calling theſe Labourers. And that, not once only, but again and again; entertaining all that came, and very bountifully rewarding all he entertained, though the Time ſome of them were employed had been but very ſhort. All this does our heavenly Houſholder too. He appoints and calls us to our Duty, he frequently repeats that Call, and does not caſt us off at our firſt Refuſal. Nay, he does more than any Maſter upon Earth can do; for he prepares our Hearts to hearken to his Calls, he ſtrengthens and aſſiſts us in the Duty we are called to: He rewards us according to our good Diſpoſitions, and graciouſly conſiders what Opportunities we had, and what uſe we would have made of more, if we had had more. It is by Him, that we begin, go on, and perſevere, as we ought. And, when he calls us to receive our Wages, he pays us for the Work which without Him we could never have done; A Work which cannot deſerve, but yet which is a neceſſary Condition of, our Reward. And herein are manifeſted the Freedom of his Grace, and the greatneſs of his Bounty; Not in bringing Men to Heaven without good Works, but in doing it for ſuch Works, as himſelf impowers them to diſcharge.

Secondly, We ſhall do well to obſerve, how the Command here runs, *Go ye into the Vineyard*, that is, to labour there. And, as in a Vineyard there is great variety of Employment, ſo is it here likewiſe. And a Man then and there only labours as he ought, when he diligently and conſcientiouſly diſcharges the Duties of his own Station. When he conſiders the Poſt, and the ſeveral Relations, Providence hath placed him in; and whether He be Magiſtrate or Private Subject, Prieſt or Pariſhioner, Parent or Child, Maſter or Servant, Rich or Poor, Trader or Labouring-Man,

ſtudies the Part belonging to him, takes care to anſwer all juſt Expectations from his Character, and honeſtly follows his particular Buſineſs and Calling. This then is truly and properly to work in God's Vineyard, to do our Duty to Him, and to our Neighbour. The State of a Chriſtian conſequently is not a State of Idleneſs and Eaſe. This State is that Vineyard which we are already entred into. We were ſo at our Baptiſm, and it is too late to think of retracting, unleſs we reſolve to give up all our Hopes, and are content to forfeit all our Pretenſions to our Wages. If therefore we have been careleſs, and have loſt time, this muſt be made up by doubling our Diligence. And it is probable, this was the Motive, that induced the Houſholder to make his later Labourers equal in Pay, that they had plied their Buſineſs harder, and made themſelves equal in diſpatch, with thoſe who were hired early. This, it is evident, was the Caſe of the Gentiles, who came up to the Jews in every Inſtance of Faith and Obedience. This was St. *Paul*'s, who, though called the laſt of them, yet *laboured more abundantly than all the Apoſtles.* And it is often the Caſe of Late Penitents, whoſe ſenſe of their former Miſcarriages and Neglects is apt to inflame their Zeal, and to put them upon making Reparation, by more exalted Acts of Piety and Virtue. And This is moſt agreeable to that Character, ſo frequently given of our great Maſter, that he *rewards every man according to his work.*

Thirdly. The Inſtance of the Murmuring Labourers ſhould teach us Humility and Charity: Not to be puffed up with a vain Opinion of our own Deſerts, not to undervalue thoſe of our Brethren: To receive our Recompence thankfully, as the Full that does, as More indeed than ſtrictly can, belong to us: And to rejoyce in the Happineſs of Others, as no diminution, but an increaſe rather, to our own. And there-

fore

fore we ſhould be ſo far from preſuming to grudge, or call our Maſter to account for, his Liberality to our Fellow-labourers, that it ſhould be rather matter of the higheſt Satisfaction, to ſee thoſe recovered out of the Snare of the Devil, who uſed to be taken captive by him at his Will. For it is the Effect of God's Mercy, that We our ſelves were admitted to ſo profitable an Agreement, how early ſoever we came in. And when our ſelves have what we covenanted for; As it is no wrong, ſo neither ought it to provoke our Indignation, that Others are bountifully dealt with. For, even ſuppoſing Them to receive over-meaſure, this hurts not, and therefore ſhould not grieve, any who receive their full meaſure.

4. *Fourthly.* Let us be ſure to make a right uſe of the Encouragement given here to theſe Labourers at the *Eleventh hour.* Which muſt be done, not by rendring it an Argument for Preſumption, to ſooth us up in Impenitence or Sloth; as if God were bound to receive us, at what time, and upon what Terms, we pleaſe. This is extremely to pervert the Text; which tells us indeed, That Call was the laſt: But it does not tell us, That they, who refuſed his former Calls, were called again and again. If this be done, 'tis Grace and Favour, not Juſtice and Debt. But We, who live under the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, have his Calls daily ſounding in our Ears; and, if we continue obſtinately deaf, cannot be ſure, that our laſt Call is not already over. The true Benefit then ariſing from hence is, to all ſuch as have had the Unhappineſs to lie long in Sin and Ignorance: That God will accept and reward them, though they come late into the Vineyard, provided they then apply themſelves heartily to their Maſter's buſineſs, and work faithfully to the uttermoſt of their power. That he makes gracious Allowances for Hindrances and Infirmities; but then he expects, that We ſhould

be

be ſenſible of them too; that we ſhould lament, and ſtrive againſt them, and do the beſt we can: remember, that the longer it is before we begin, the leſs Day we have to work in; and therefore make the more haſte to be ready for the Evening, that draws on apace, when an Account of what we have done ſhall be taken, and our Wages awarded accordingly. This is the true Intent of the Parable, in that part of it. And ſo well does the Goſpel fall in with the Epiſtle of this Day: and Both together ſo very well agree, to fit us for the approaching time of Mortification, deſigned to awaken the Sluggiſh, to quicken the Loitering, and ſet forward every Labourer in this Spiritual Vineyard. And oh! that we all may receive Inſtruction from hence, and be wiſe; underſtand our Advantages, and the Goodneſs of our Maſter; conſider our Latter-end, the Approach of that Night which muſt end in day Eternal; the Happineſs of that Approach to all diligent and faithful Labourers, but the Terror and diſmal Conſequences of it to every ſlothful and unprofitable Servant; That ſo we *may work the works of him that ſent us* into this Vineyard, while it *is day, before that time come wherein no man can work!*

The

The Sunday called Sexageſima; *Or, The Second Sunday before* Lent.

The COLLECT.

O Lord God, who ſeeſt that we put not our Truſt in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant, that by thy Power we may be defended againſt all Adverſity, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

2 Corinth. xi. 19.

19. Ye (like others who are or pretend to be wiſe) can ſurely bear with the Indiſcretions of others.

19. *YE ſuffer fools gladly, ſeeing ye your ſelves are wiſe.*

20. And what I am about to trouble you with, is plainly a great deal leſs than your falſe Teachers put upon you, whoſe enſlaving you to the Jewiſh Law again, whoſe inſatiable Avarice, and making a prey of you, their Inſolence and Tyranny, and contumelious Uſage to the moſt intolerable degree, you can patiently away with.

20. *For ye ſuffer if a man bring you into bon dage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himſelf, if a man ſmite you on the face.*

21. And yet what have they to value themſelves upon, that I have not?

21. *I ſpeak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak: Howbeit, wherein ſoever any is bold, (I ſpeak fooliſhly) I am bold alſo.*

22. In all the Privileges of Birth and Deſcent, I am equal.

22. *Are they Hebrews? ſo am I. Are they Iſraelites? ſo am I. Are they the ſeed of Abraham? ſo am I.*

23. In the relation to, and Service of Chriſt (excuſe the liberty I take in ſpeaking of my ſelf) I am ſuperiour to them: My Sufferings for the Goſpel prove me ſo.

23. *Are they Miniſters of Chriſt? (I ſpeak as a fool) I am more; in Labours more abundant, in Stripes above meaſure, in Priſons more frequent, in Deaths oft.*

24. I have been five times ſcourged by the Jews to the utmoſt degree of rigour ever uſed by them. *See* Deut. xxv. 3.

24. *Of the Jews five times received I forty ſtripes ſave one.*

25. See *Acts* xvi. 22, 23. and *Acts* xiv. 19.

25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered ſhipwrack, a night and a day I have been in the deep.*

26. See *Acts* xx. 3.

26. *In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city,*

ry, in perils in the wilderneſs, in perils in the ſea, in perils among falſe brethren;

27. *In wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often, in hunger and thirſt, in faſtings often, in cold and nakedneſs;*

28. *Beſides thoſe things that are without, that which cometh upon me dayly, the care of all the Churches.*

28. And the perpetual Concern I am under for the Churches planted by me; as it is a conſtant, ſo is it a very heavy Article.

29. *Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?*

29. Among all theſe no Perſon is afflicted but I ſympathize with him; none diſcouraged in his Duty, or in danger of falling off from his Principles, but I even burn with zeal to reduce and ſettle him.

30. *If I needs muſt glory, I will glory of the things which concern my Infirmities.*

30. Your Seducers and the Partiality ſhewn to them, force me to glory: but the Subject I chooſe for it, is ſuch as others would rather account matter of Humiliation; my Sufferings for the Goſpel.

31. *The God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is bleſſed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.*

31. And for the truth of what I have ſaid on this occaſion, I ſolemnly appeal to God, &c.

COMMENT.

THis Portion of Scripture is the more remarkable, becauſe it preſents us with a great Apoſtle, engaged in an Act very unuſual, and (generally ſpeaking) very unbecoming that Character, the Commendation of himſelf. It is therefore highly neceſſary, in order to underſtand and be able to account for ſuch a Proceeding, that we conſider very carefully, *Firſt*, The Occaſion, *Secondly*, The Manner of it. After which, I ſhall draw ſome Reflections from the whole.

1. The Occaſion, it is plain, was the Corruptions brought into the Church of *Corinth*, by ſome falſe Teachers, who, (like thoſe of the ſame Stamp in every Age and Church) had inſinuated themſelves into the Affections of the People; As by other Arts

of Subtlety and Deceit; ſo more eſpecially, by extolling their own Ability and Merit, and by diſparaging Reflections upon their regular Paſtor. The People it ſeems were there (as they uſually are) credulous and eaſie enough to be caught with this guile; drunk in the Prejudices againſt S. *Paul*; and were grown ſo immoderately fond of their new Teachers; that, at the ſame time they thought the juſt and gentle Authority of an Apoſtle a Yoke too heavy, the utmoſt Vanity and Inſolence, the moſt inſatiable Pillagings, and Avarice, the moſt imperious Tyranny, and contumelious Treatment, went down very contentedly, from the hands of thoſe idolized Intruders. Had this Partiality had no farther conſequence, than the leſſening S. *Paul*'s private Profit or Reputation, he would not have thought it worth while to vindicate his Honour ſo ſollicitouſly. But, foreſeeing that ſo undeſerved a Preference of the Men would certainly bring on a liking of their Errors, and ſo endanger the Souls of as many as ſhould adhere to them; Charity to his Brethren called for Juſtice to Himſelf. And for the ſake of thoſe deluded Wretches, and to do right to the truth, he found it neceſſary to aſſert his Due, to provoke thoſe bold Detractors to a Compariſon; And ſo at once to ſhew, how much He, how little They, were able to produce in proof of an Authority, which He was legally inveſted with, and exerciſed with Lenity and Temper, but They by dint of Arrogance took to themſelves, and abuſed to the vileſt purpoſes of Calumny and Faction.

Such was the Occaſion, ſuch the End, of our Apoſtle appearing here, in a Figure ſo unlike that he commonly makes in his Writings. Which, though they be ſo reaſonable, and ſo urgent, he yet manages ſo as to clear his Humility of all Suſpicions, that the moſt captious Adverſary could caſt upon it. As may appear from my

2. *Second* Particular. The Manner of this Proceeding. In which we ought to obſerve,

1. The many Apologies for, or ſeeming Condemnations of himſelf in giving way ſo far to the Provocation of thoſe who ſpoke or thought diſhonourably of him. Of this kind are thoſe Expreſſions; *I ſpeak fooliſhly*, Ver. 21. *I ſpeak as a fool*, Ver. 23. *If I muſt needs glory*, Ver. 30. *It is not expedient for me doubtleſs to glory*, Chap. xii. 1. *I am become a fool in glorifying, ye have compelled me*, xii. 11. with the reſt to the ſame purpoſe. So cautiouſly does the Apoſtle behave himſelf, in a Point which he rightly underſtood to be ſo nice. For, as the expatiating upon our ſelves, without any neceſſity, is of all Faults in Converſation the moſt nauſeous and offenſive, ſo the being extremely tender and officious even in our own Vindication is ſeldom free from Vanity. This is the Caſe of all Mankind, but eſpecially the Miniſters of Chriſt; Who muſt expect a ſhare in Calumnies and Contradictions, and ought to be armed with Patience to endure them, above the proportion of common Men. When therefore theſe have influence upon their perſonal Advantages only, it is generally better to leave the clearing of their Innocence to Time, and the evidence of a good Converſation. Where they reflect upon their Character, and, by poiſoning the People with ill Impreſſions, tend to obſtruct the efficacy of their Labours; the Cauſe becomes publick, their Charge is concerned, and a becoming Sollicitude to ſet all right, in ſuch Circumſtances, is no longer Zeal for their Own, but Charity for Other Mens Safety and Good. And yet, even in theſe Circumſtances, S. *Paul*'s Example teaches us, how careful we ought to be, in warding off all the ſpightful Conſtructions apt to be made, of the moſt neceſſary, and the moſt modeſt Publication of our own Conduct and Deſervings.

2. Some farther Inſtruction of this kind may be gathered, from the Subject, which S. *Paul* chooſes here to enlarge upon. Not the Greatneſs of his Miracles, not the Power of his Eloquence and Arguments; Not the Succeſs of his Labours, the Number of the Converts he had won, or of the Churches he had planted; though no Man could with greater right have alledged theſe: But only the Toils and Hardſhips, the Perſecutions and Afflictions, which the Diſcharge of his Miniſtry had engaged him in. Theſe were ſuch Privileges, as his Adverſaries neither had, nor deſired to have, to boaſt of. They, as the 20th Verſe intimates, had other things in view; the Gain of private Contributions, the Command of their Hearer's Purſes, and an abſolute Dominion over their Perſons.

Verſ. 21, 22. The Grounds, upon which they exalted themſelves, were all taken from worldly Advantages, and in that reſpect S. *Paul* is content to declare himſelf their Equal: The Regards he declares himſelf their Superiour in, are ſuch, as They were well enough ſatisfied to give him Preference in; Stripes and Impriſonments, Shipwracks and Deaths, hard and perillous Journeys, Cold, and Hunger, and Thirſt. Theſe it was ſo far from Vanity to glory in, that the

Chap. xii. Apoſtle found it requiſite to ſubjoyn his being honoured with extraordinary Viſions and Revelations, to prevent ſo great a degree, ſo conſtant a ſucceſſion of Sufferings, from being turned into an argument of God's Diſpleaſure, againſt one ſo inceſſantly exerciſed with them. And yet theſe Afflictions were really the propereſt and moſt worthy matter of glorying to the Apoſtle. The propereſt, becauſe it was perfectly free from Vanity or Self-ſeeking, (for His were not Sufferings, either induſtriouſly courted, or magnified to be made a Gain of) And the moſt worthy, becauſe, to all who duly conſidered them, they were Proofs of large meaſures

of

of Grace ſupporting him under them, of unparallell'd Sincerity and Zeal diſpoſing him ſo cheerfully to perſevere in encountring them, and of the Truth of that Doctrine, which by the Miniſtry of one ſo ill treated, could yet gain ſo much ground, and triumph over them.

The Profit fit for us to make of the Paſſage thus explained, is as follows.

1. The Deſcription given here of falſe Teachers ſhould be a Warning to all Chriſtians againſt liſtening to them: An Admonition to ſuſpect and beware of ſuch, as make it their buſineſs, to infuſe into Men Jealouſies and evil Surmiſes againſt their lawful Paſtors; a ſure ſign that they therefore draw off their People, becauſe thereout they ſuck no ſmall Advantage. For Theſe *Corinthians* are far from the only Inſtance of Mens being even devoured by Seducers, and finding the Little-fingers of ſuch, thicker than the Loins of regular Apoſtles. And if it ſhould, as ſometimes it may, happen, that ſuch may have Sufferings and Hardſhips to alledge for their Miniſtry: yet even then care muſt be taken to look into the ground of thoſe Sufferings: whether theſe alſo be not a profitable Bargain for this World; and a Perſecution ſo called, but in truth a ſetting their Quiet to ſale at the higheſt Market. In a word, None, who urge S. *Paul*'s Argument rightly, will ſuffer for Evil-doers againſt the Laws of Men, in caſes where thoſe are not manifeſtly againſt the Laws of God.

2. The Inſtance now before us ſhews, how far we ought to be from reckoning what we endure for God's Cauſe (when it is really God's cauſe) matter of Sorrow or Shame to us. St. *Paul* was, in compariſon of the reſt of the Apoſtles, a Labourer called in at the Eleventh hour. And he thought, as he taught the *Philippians* to eſteem, it a particular Grace, that it was given him, *not only to believe in*

Jesus, but to suffer for his Name. The fervency of his Charity and Zeal made up what was wanting in point of time. And We, (especially those among us that are Ministers of the Gospel) never make a more just Computation of our Services, than when we reckon them by the Hardships and Self-denyals we are content to undergo, for the Good of our own Souls, or those of our Christian Brethren.

3. *Thirdly.* When S. *Paul*, to all his other Sufferings, adds the Care of all the Churches, and the zealous Compassion over them that failed, or were afflicted in them; This shews the Abundance of His, and instructs us what ought to be the measure of Our, Charity. Not to neglect, or think our selves excused from a tender Concern for, the Afflictions or Dangers of our Brethren, upon the account of any Sufferings of our own. Be our other Circumstances what they will, yet still we are Members of Christ's Body; And while that Relation continues, all the Duties resulting from it must do so too. So indispensable and perpetual a Duty is Charity, for the Souls of others especially; So far indeed are those Hardships, which lie outward and open to the view of others, from being the most sensible part of what Good-men endure.

4. *Lastly.* The Methods used for exercising S. *Paul*'s Patience and Virtue, teach us plainly, that the way, in which God would be served by Christians, but especially by his Ministers, is that of Constancy, and indefatigable Diligence, and diffusive Charity. That Ease, and Idleness, and Luxury, and effeminate Declinings of Trouble for the Publick Good, are by no means agreeable to a Disciple of Jesus his Character. And thus the Apostle, as in the last, so again in this Lord's-Day Service, does, by his own Example, encourage and prepare us for the Discipline of the Season drawing on. One great Design whereof is,

to break the Softneſs of a Nature, too indulgent to Fleſh and Blood, and to inure us to *endure Hardſhip like good Souldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*. In which Warfare, the leſs we ſpare our own Perſons; the more we may depend upon His Protection and Support in the Conflict, and the brighter Trophies we ſhall raiſe to His Glory, the Honour of Religion, and the unſpeakable Advantage of our Souls and Bodies both, in that Day of Triumph and Joy: Which God grant us all a part in, for our Dear Redeemer's ſake. *Amen.*

Sexageſima *Sunday.*

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke viii. 4.

4. *WHEN much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every City, he ſpake by a parable:*

PARAPHRASE.

4. The Multitudes that followed our Lord to the Sea-ſide were ſo great, that he went into a Ship and left them on the Shore, and ſat down and taught them out of the Ship, by this following, and ſeveral other Parables, *Matth. xiii.* 1, 2, 3. *Mark iv.* 1, 2.

5. *A ſower went out to ſow his ſeed; and as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way ſide, and it was troden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.*

6. *And ſome fell upon a rock; and as ſoon as it was ſprung up, it withered away, becauſe it lacked moiſture.*

6. Some fell on ſtony places, the Heat whereof cauſed it to ſhoot apace, but when the Weather grew hot, the Sun ſcorched it up, by reaſon the Soil was not deep enough to preſerve it at the Root, *Matth. xiii.* 5, 6. *Mark iv.* 5, 6.

7. *And ſome fell among thorns; and the thorns ſprang up with it and choked it.*

8. *And other fell on good ground, and ſprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold. And when he had ſaid theſe things he cried, He that hath ears to hear let him hear.*

8. That which had good Soil bore kindly fruit, in proportion to the Condition of the Ground. See *Matth. xiii.* 8. *Mark iv.* 8. This is a Parable, that highly deſerves your Attention.

9. *And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this Parable be?*

10. As a Reward of your diligence and desire to be informed, these shall be explained to you; but the rest shall be left in the dark, and have their voluntary punished with judicial Ignorance. See *Matth.* xiii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *Mark* iv. 11, 12.

10. *And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*

11. *Now the Parable is this. The Seed is the word of God.*

12. The Persons represented by Seed sown by the way side, are such as take no care to understand what they hear; but suffer the Tempter to take away the Word, that is, are tempted to forget and neglect it, and so lose all good effect of it.

12. *Those by the way side, are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*

13. Compare *Matth.* xiii. 20, 21. *Mark* iv. 16, 17.

13. *They on the rock are they which, when they hear, receive the word with joy: and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

14. Compare *Matth.* xiii. 22. *Mark* iv. 18, 19.

14. *And that which fell among thorns are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

15. *But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with* * *patience.*

* By Constancy in suffering, and Perseverance in doing well.

And though all who behave themselves thus do not produce the same Quantity of Fruit, yet are they all good Ground. Compare *Matth.* xiii. 23. *Mark* iv. 20.

COMMENT.

SCarce any Passage, in the whole Course of the Year, is more worthy our serious Consideration, than that, which our Excellent Church hath wisely appointed to be read for the Gospel of this Day. That Heathens and Jews, profess'd Infidels and Enemies to Christianity, that They, who want Opportunies of knowing their Duty, and would gladly use them if they

they could; that Others, who live within the Pale of Chriſt's Flock, and have Opportunities, but will not uſe them when they may; that theſe ſeveral ſorts of People, I ſay, ſhould continue unfruitful, is nothing ſtrange. But that Many, who have them, and do uſe them, nay, and uſe them gladly too; that They, who *come* to the publick Aſſemblies for Religious Worſhip, as *God's People cometh*, and *ſit before* his Prophets *as God's People ſitteth*, and attend to the Preacher with Eagerneſs and a ſenſible Delight; that Theſe after all ſhould prove barren and unprofitable, is Matter to be ſure of great Grief, and muſt be allowed to carry ſomewhat of Difficulty, and of Wonder in it. And yet that ſo it is; that the Miniſters of Chriſt often ſow where they never reap, but loſe the deſired Effect of their Pious Intentions and moſt Zealous Endeavours, our Bleſſed Saviour acquaints us in this Scripture, and our own daily Experience does but too viſibly confirm the Truth of it. So that it concerns every Chriſtian diligently to examine into the Cauſes of ſuch lamentable Diſappointments. Which that we may know, and effectually prevent, our Lord hath laid them down at large, in the Parable and Application now before us. Of which in order to make the beſt profit we can, it will be proprer to obſerve the following Particulars.

1. *Firſt*, That this Parable was ſpoken before a mixt and numerous Auditory, *When much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every City.* Verſe 4. The other Evangeliſts inform us, That no ſooner had *Jeſus* left his Retirement, but the Multitudes, who had flocked in from the adjacent Towns, purſued him down to the Seaſide; that at this very time he taught them out of a Ship; that, ſcarce content to allow him leiſure for the common Refreſhments of Nature, they purſued him Matt. xiii. 1. Mark iv. 1. 36.

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ſtill, and, when he put to Sea, procured other Veſſels, for attending him in his Voyage. Circumſtances, all theſe, of great Significance and Uſe. Since theſe ſo forward, ſo inſatiable Learners, were not in all Points what they ought to have been; ſince even to Men who expreſt then a Zeal ſo eager, as is ſcarce any where to be met with now, this Lecture of profiting by what they heard was nevertheleſs highly ſeaſonable and neceſſary. So far were They at that time from having done all that became them; So vain an Imagination is it at any time for Chriſtians to ſuppoſe, that frequenting the Church, and being diligent to hear God's Word, will ſave their Souls at laſt, without producing afterwards the ſuitable Fruits of Piety and Virtue in their Minds and Converſations.

(2.) 'Tis fit we take good Notice, in the next place, how great a Loſs this Parable deſcribes: Which, out of Four parts caſt into the Ground, tells us but of One, that turn'd to account. No better did Matters go in our Saviour's Time, and with the Hearers of Him, who *ſpoke as never Man ſpoke*. Yet would not They, who confeſs'd thus much, and could never *convince him of Sin*, or of Errour, be either perſwaded by the power of his Eloquence, or won over by the Perfection of his Example. And, though the miſcarrying of Three parts in Four may ſeem an aſtoniſhing Proportion under any Circumſtances; there is but too juſt Reaſon to fear, that, as the Frailties and Infirmities of our Preachers now are infinite, and will not allow any Compariſon between the Beſt of Them, and their Great, their Divine Maſter: So the Numbers of them that fail under their Miniſtry, are infinite alſo; and the truly fruitful Hearers, but few, but very few, and far below the proportion in this Parable.

3. This however, *Thirdly*, is not the Sower's fault. His Buſineſs is only to ſcatter the Grain, in due Seaſon, and with a liberal Hand. Now that Seed, according to our Lord's own Method of explaining himſelf, is *The Word of God*, and *He that ſoweth it is the Son of Man.* This Maſter of the Field *went out to ſow*, came down from the Throne of his Glory, and, at the fulneſs of time, converſed with Mankind in Fleſh, accommodated himſelf to their Capacities and Wants, that no poſſible means might be wanting to render his Goſpel acceptable and effectual. This Word he hath ſcattered upon all Countries and Kingdoms; firſt by the extraordinary Influences of his Spirit and Power; then by the Eſtabliſhment of a perpetual Succeſſion and Order of Miniſters, and the faithful Records of his moſt Holy Religion. If They, who are now made Sowers of this Word, ſhould be ſo unhappy, as to miſtake it through Ignorance; Or ſo perverſe, as to corrupt it through Malice and Deſign; Or ſo profligate, as to diſgrace it by ſcandalouſly wicked Lives; Yet ſtill our Bibles are our own. Theſe give it us pure and plain, and command us not to judge our Brethren, or live by Their Patterns, but to approve our ſelves to God, by governing our Actions according to His Laws. The Sins or the Weakneſs of Others, in which we take no part, ſhall never be imputed to us. And, had the Errours, or the Vices, of our Paſtors been any real and natural Cauſe of the Inefficacy of the Word, any, which might endanger the Hearers Salvation by receiving Inſtruction from Men of polluted Lips, it would not ſurely have been omitted here. For the very Deſign of this Parable is to put Men upon their Guard, by giving all neceſſary Intimations, whence that Barrenneſs proceeds in their Hearts, which brings their Souls into any manner of Hazard. Since

Verſe 11, Mark iv. 14. *Compare* Matt. xiii. 37.

then the Seed is certainly good in its kind, and ſince all due Methods have been taken for the diſtribution of it, if *He, who hath ſown plentifully, reap but very ſparingly*, the Blame caſt upon the Sower can be no better than Miſtake or mere Pretence; And, if we will be juſt, we muſt acknowledge His Bounty and His Care, and are to ſeek for the fault ſomewhere elſe.

4. Now, *Fourthly*, This is farther of very great moment, that, although there be many Accidents, as Floods, or Drought, or Froſts, or Blaſts, which frequently ſpoil the Corn, after it is in the Ground; Yet none are taxed with unfruitfulneſs in this Parable, except ſuch only, as are Defects peculiar to the Ground it ſelf. Thus, in proportion, many Things there are, not at our own diſpoſal, which muſt contribute to our Spiritual Growth, and yet no mention is made of them in this Parable. Very wiſely, this. For, had ſuch been inſiſted on, we might have had ſome reaſon to conclude, that Men ſometimes diſcharge their part, but God does not bleſs them with Increaſe: That he denies them neceſſary Grace, and ſo curſes and condemns them to Barrenneſs, by checking thoſe Improvements, which They are well diſpoſed and labour hard to make, but cannot with their utmoſt Pains effect it. But now, as the Caſe is repreſented to us, the Ground alone is accuſed in the Figure; And conſequently the Heart of Man, which anſwers to that Ground, in the Application. And it is but a fond Abuſe, that Men are guilty of to themſelves, when they look abroad for ſome frivolous Excuſe, to which the Scriptures give not the leaſt Colour; when they would ſhift off their own unprofitableneſs upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel, or, which is yet more impious, upon the partial and too ſparing Communications of God himſelf. Whereas it is the plain Intention of our Bleſſed Maſter, and the true Scope of this whole Paſſage, to charge the

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unſucceſsful Preaching of God's Word, wholly and ſolely upon the Defects and Indiſpoſitions of them that hear it.

5. Nay, which is more, and brings the Matter home, I beg it may be conſidered, in the *Fifth* place, that thoſe very Defects and Indiſpoſitions ſeem to be only ſuch, as are owing entirely to Mens own Ill-huſbandry and Neglect. Suffering Path-ways to be made over their Ground, and their Lands and Furrows to be troden even; Not gathering out the Stones, and rooting up the Briars and Thorns: Theſe are aſſigned for the Cauſes of this Barrenneſs, and not any Leanneſs or Natural Poverty in the Soil it ſelf. Accordingly we find that Ground commended for Good, whoſe Product is anſwerable to the Quality of its Soil. For the Other Goſpels expreſs that Goodneſs, by *bringing forth fruit, ſome an hundred, ſome ſixty, and ſome thirty fold.*

The plain meaning whereof is, That, where God hath endowed Men with greater Abilities, he expects a greater Increaſe; and where he hath dealt them more ſparingly, he is very well ſatisfied with leſs. But though he does not, in this ſenſe, gather where he hath not ſtrewed, nor reap where he hath not ſown, yet he always expects an Harveſt agreeable to what he hath ſown. The Man therefore, who brings forth *thirty-fold*, and was not in a Condition of doing more, is Good Ground; But He, who brings *Thirty* only, when he was in a Capacity of *bringing Sixty or an hundred-fold*, muſt never hope to be eſteem'd *Good Ground.* As God then requires an Account of our Abilities and Opportunities, ſo he makes gracious Allowances for our Weakneſs and Want of them: He does not regard the Quantity, ſo much as the Diſpoſition; but allows mean Attainments to conſiſt very well with bringing forth Fruit: Such, and ſo much, as he kindly accepts, and is exceedingly well pleaſed with:

with. He imputes Barrenneſs to no Man, but upon ſuch Defects, as are not of Natures, but of his own making. The honeſt and good Heart is what he requires, and what we are principally concerned to look after. He hath promiſed expreſly, upon this very Occaſion, that our becoming fruitful ſhall in great meaſure depend upon our ſelves: that They, who do their own Endeavours faithfully, ſhall be by his Grace ſtrengthened to do more; And he declares, that They who neglect their own Improvement, ſhall fall from Bad to Worſe, loſe their own Powers, and forfeit His Aſſiſtances. *Take heed* (ſays he) *therefore how ye hear, for whoſoever hath to him ſhall be given;* Verſe 18. *and whoſoever hath not from him ſhall be taken away, even that, which he ſeemeth to have.*

6. The *Laſt* and Principal Thing, that calls for our Attention, is the different Character of the Good and Bad Ground, which, by comparing them together, will be found to conſiſt in the *Three* following Particulars.

1. They that are ſignified by the *Good Ground keep the Word*, and thus are oppoſed to *thoſe by the Way-ſide*, who immediately loſt it. Ver. 12. & 15.

2. *They on the Good Ground keep it in an honeſt and good heart*, and in this are contrary to them *among Thorns*, with *whom the Cares, and Riches, and Pleaſures of this Life choke the Word*, ſo that *they bring no Fruit to perfection.* Ver. 14. & 15.

3. *They on the Good Ground bring forth Fruit with patience*, and herein differ from the *Stony Ground*, which repreſents them, who *receive the Word with joy, but have no Root; who for a while believe, and in time of Temptation fall away.* Ver. 13. & 15.

1. The Firſt Qualification then obſervable in the *Good Ground* is, that the Perſons ſignified by it *keep the Word*;

Word: and thus are oppoſed to the failing of them *by the Way-ſide.* Who, (as the Applications of this Parable, when compared together, acquaint us) do *not underſtand*, or conſider *the Word, but Satan cometh immediately, and taketh it away out of their Hearts.* These laſt Words in the Expoſition anſwer to thoſe in the Figure, *that the Seed was troden down, and the Fowls of the Air came and devoured it.*

Verſe 12. Matt. xiii. 19. Mark iv. 15. Verſe 5. Matt. xiii. 4.

Hereby no doubt are meant the Careleſs and Unthinking Hearers, who frequent Religious Aſſemblies, to ſave their Credit, or comply with Cuſtom; to gratify a Curioſity, or perhaps to expoſe and ſtart new Cavils out of what they hear; but without any care to anſwer the true Purpoſes of Hearing. And therefore, either attend not, or recollect not, or apply not to their own Conſcience and Condition. But like the common way, have their hearts open to every freſh Comer, and ſuffer the next trifling or wicked Imagination to take place, and utterly to deface the former Impreſſions.

Such vain Thoughts, I conceive, are intended by *the fowls of the air*, in the Parable. For it is not by any viſible or violent means, but by ſuggeſting idle Fancies, and diſſipating better and more ſerious Conſiderations, that *Satan catches away the good Seed.* And we greatly miſtake the matter, if we ſuppoſe, that Religious Truths convey themſelves to our Underſtandings, or influence our Affections, in a manner different from others. It is by ſerious Application of Thought, careful Remembrance, and frequent Reflection, that we muſt faſten theſe things alſo upon us. And God, who gave us reaſoning Faculties, expects they ſhould be employed in matters of this nature, at leaſt as much as in any other. Where the Sower hath caſt in the Grain, his buſineſs, as a

Sower,

Sower, is at an end: But the covering up and cherishing what we have received, must be every man's own work.

That then, which we are principally concern'd for in this regard, is, To come to God's publick Worship, and all other Reading and Hearing of his blessed Word, with due Reverence and earnest Attention: To consider these as the means, ordinarily necessary, for bringing us to himself; Consequently, that this Word was never designed purely for our Entertainment or Diversion, to be nicely distinguish'd, learnedly disputed, eloquently enlarged upon, but to influence all our Powers, and put forth into Action: That it is therefore called Seed, because the first and common Principle, whence all our Virtue springs: That the End of it therefore is never answer'd, but by bringing forth Fruit, and that Fruit is no other than a good Conversation. These are Considerations, which every Man should be possess'd with perpetually, but especially at all Seasons of Devotion and publick Instruction; And, if We were so, these would check all our loose Wandrings, awaken all our Faculties, fix what we hear in our hearts, and so effectually convince us of the vast Importance of the Duty we are about, that we could scarce continue to be Men, and not get above the negligent and fickle Disposition of those Hearers *by the wayside.*

2. The next Qualification I took notice of, is, that the Persons represented by *the good ground, keep the word in an honest and good heart.* Which seems more particularly opposite to them, *which fell among Thorns*; Of whom it is observed, that *the Cares of the World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches, and the Pleasures of this life choak the Word, so that they bring no fruit to perfection.* These are supposed to have made a better

Vers. 14.

Mark iv. 18, 19.

Progress

Progreſs than the Former, to hear, and perhaps to conſider and apply very ſeriouſly; But when they come to Action, the Buſineſs and Diverſions, the Intereſts and Intanglements of the World interfere, and will not let them be good Chriſtians. Thus they do, and thus they will do, wherever theſe Briars are ſuffered to get a Head. For which reaſon our Lord, very appoſitely to his preſent Subject, takes particular notice of *the Deceitfulneſs of Riches*. For Deceitful they are, not only as they cheat Men in the Happineſs and Satisfaction they fondly expect from them; but upon a yet more fatal Account, as they perpetually puſh them on to freſh Purſuits, daily kindle new and more vehement Deſires, and defeat their repeated Reſolutions of ridding their Hands of all Incumbrances, and ſeeking the Kingdom of *God and his Righteouſneſs*. And thus they egg Men on to old Age, and the approach of Death; till they learn too late, at their laſt Hour, that it is to no manner of purpoſe, that we hope to compound the Matter between God and Mammon; but that He, who will *cleave to the one*, muſt of neceſſity deſpiſe and forſake the other.

What muſt be done to cure this unhappy Diſpoſition? The propereſt Method I can adviſe, is to attend to the Advantage, and the Neceſſity, of being truly Religious; To over-balance the Allurements of this preſent World, by the proſpect of an Eternal Glory to come; To convince our ſelves throughly, how very childiſh and ſilly a Bargain a Man would make, though we ſhould ſuppoſe him able to do that, which no Man ever will be able to do, that is, though he *could gain the whole World*, if at the ſame time he muſt *loſe his own Soul*; and that there is not, cannot be, any valuable Compenſation *given in exchange for the Soul*. This Senſe would bring Men to receive the Word impartially and fairly, without any Mixture of

Prejudice or Paſſion; This would render us diligent in our Callings, but without Diſtraction; careful for our Families, but without Anxiety; inflexible to ſinful, and moderate in our moſt lawful Pleaſures and Enjoyments. And in ſuch a clear and free Diſpoſition of Soul, that is ready to ſubmit to the Whole of Religion; that cloſes with its Duty, though it be unpalatable, and counter to the Affections of a ſenſual and worldly Mind; not cleaving to One Commandment, becauſe it may be reconciled with our preſent Profit or Delight, and taking diſtaſt at another, becauſe it checks us in, or debars us from them; In this candid, open, diſpaſſionate Temper of Mind, I take the *Honeſt and Good Heart*, mentioned here, principally to conſiſt.

3. The Laſt Difference obſervable here, is that the Perſons reſembled by the *Good Ground*, Ver. 13. & 15. *bring forth Fruit with Patience*, whereas *they on the Stony Ground receive the Word indeed with Joy*, but *have no Root*, and therefore though *for a while they believe, yet in time of Temptation they fall away*. Theſe Men, we may ſuppoſe to be Proof againſt common Cares and Accidents, but if ſome unforeſeen Difficulty or trying Affliction aſſault them, theſe undermine the unfaithful Foundation quite, and waſh the Building off from its ſandy Bottom. The Mark then of an *Honeſt and Good Heart*, in this reſpect, is *Patience*. A firm and ſteady Piety (like that of St. *Paul* in the Epiſtle for this Day) not to be ſhaken with Hardſhips and Sufferings for the Truth. And though the giving Ground in ſuch Caſes be what we are apt rather to pity than condemn, becauſe it looks like the Effect of Humane Infirmity; yet our Saviour here makes thoſe Yieldings an Argument, that ſuch Men *have no Root*; that is, they were not well principled at the bottom. And indeed the Similitude in this Parable proves this evidently. For the ſame Heat of

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the Sun, which ſcorches and burns up the Corn that wanteth depth of Earth, does but cheriſh and ripen the good Corn. And thus it is with Afflictions: They do not make Men unſincere, but find them ſo, and diſcover them to be ſo. The Fire ſeparates the Droſs from the Gold, but it makes no part Droſs, which was not Droſs before. And Adverſities are therefore called Tryals, becauſe they bring Mens Integrity to the Touch; and ſhew, whether they ſerve God for preſent Profit and Convenience, or for his own ſake, and from a well-grounded Perſwaſion of their Duty. Hence it is clear, we muſt not ſatisfy our ſelves with hearing, and conſidering, and applying, but muſt compoſe our Minds with quiet and contented Submiſſion to the good Providence of God, and eſteem it our Joy and Crown, when we are counted worthy to ſuffer for Chriſt and Righteouſneſs-ſake. If Chriſtianity required the Conviction of our Judgments only, all that will be content to think and underſtand impartially, muſt be good Chriſtians. But becauſe the Goſpel is intended to rule in our Hearts, and to give Law to all our Paſſions, and all our Intereſts; therefore it is, that ſo great Quantities of this Spiritual Seed are ſown in vain. And ſince no Man anſwers the End of that Seed, who refuſes in Practice, what he allows in Speculation, by letting go his Hopes of Bliſs in another World, for the declining any Miſeries that can be endured in this World; therefore the Virtue which faints in the day of Tryal, however proſperous and promiſing it may appear, is allowed no better a Character, than that of Grain caſt upon *Stony Ground*.

There is another Senſe of the word *Patience*, fit to be taken notice of, as it ſignifies *Perſeverance*, and a contented Waiting for the appointed Weeks of Harveſt. And thus the Hearers of this kind, will not envy them, who put forth apace ὑπομονὴ.

and ſpend themſelves too faſt; but be content with Conflicts, though they be ſharp and long; and to get ſome Ground of their Luſts, though it be won but by Inches. To which purpoſe we may interpret our Bleſſed Lord, when comparing the *Kingdom of God to Corn that cometh up one knows not how.* Its Growth is often not diſcernible by Others, ſometimes not by our Selves; yet live and grow it does. And, if our Pride and Impatience, or ſome other ill Quality check it not, will in due time produce wholſome and kindly, which is much rather to be choſen, than forward and undigeſted, Fruit. We muſt not therefore be diſcouraged, if we cannot be and do, what we deſire and ſtrive for, Grace as well as Nature, works gradually, and muſt be left to its own Methods. And that is true of the Soil of our Hearts, which our Lord hath obſerved, to a purpoſe not very diſtant from this I am upon, that the *Earth bringeth forth Fruit of her ſelf, firſt the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn in the Ear.*

Mark iv. 27.

Mark iv. 28.

There needs no more to ſhew, what Temper is required to bring forth Fruit, and how it comes to paſs, that this is ſo ſeldom done: That the Seed and the Sower are blameleſs, and all the Defects in the Ground it ſelf. The Goſpel ſets both our Duty, and our Danger, before our Eyes. Theſe it is the Miniſter's part to urge. He muſt apply himſelf with all his Might, to perſwade, to convince, to awaken, as occaſion ſerves. But all this our Maſter did in the utmoſt Perfection, and yet even He often ſowed without any Fruit. And, the Truth is, What can We do? We can recommend Religion to Mens Conſideration, and we ought to do it as powerfully as may be. But after all we have ſaid or can ſay, it will lie in their own Breaſts, whether they will conſider or no. And they who do not, are Hearers *by*

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the Way-ſide. We may tell our People, how looſe the World ſhould ſit about them, that a Good Life ſhould be their main Concern, that they muſt learn and practiſe their Duty, all Prejudice and Intereſt apart: But it is not in our Power to diſintangle their Hearts, and root out their Prejudices; and till this be done, they *are Seed among Thorns*. So, *laſtly*, we can excite to Patience, but we cannot inſpire it; and They who faint and fall off, are *Stony Ground*. Conſequently, when the Preacher hath done all he can do, and all he ought to do, ſtill the Efficacy and Succeſs of his Inſtructions will depend upon the Hearers themſelves. Inadvertency, and Worldly-mindedneſs, and Impatience, are Obſtructions of every One's making, and therefore they muſt be of every One's removing too. And, where they are not taken out of the way, our Barrenneſs, and the whole Guilt of it can reſt no where but upon our ſelves.

I have not forgotten to obſerve before, how much of this depends upon the Divine Aſſiſtance, and upon what Conditions we may be ſure of That, to ſtrengthen and to proſper our Endeavours. Let us but add to theſe our hearty Prayers, and the Work will certainly be done; And therefore, *That it may pleaſe Thee to give to all thy people increaſe of Grace, to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure Affection; and to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit*;

We beſeech Thee to hear us, good Lord!

The Sunday called Quinquageſima; *Or, the Next Sunday before* Lent.

The COLLECT.

1 *Cor.* xiii. 1,2,3. —— xii. 31. *Coloſſ.* iii. 14. *Jam.* ii. 26.

O Lord, who haſt taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth; Pour into our Hearts that moſt excellent Gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace and of all Virtues, without which whoſoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thy only Son Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. The Gifts of the Spirit, ſo much coveted and envied among you, are yet in no degree ſo neceſſary for one's ſelf, or ſo uſeful to others, as the Grace of Charity;

3. Nay, even the moſt exalted Acts of Piety and Zeal loſe all their Value, if they do not proceed from this Principle of Charity.

5. Doth not think any good Office unfit to be condeſeended to, (ſo *Chryſoſt.*) does not confine its Endeavours to its own private Good; does not give way to violence of Paſſion; meditates no Miſchief to (or ſuſpects no ill of) others; Takes no Satisfaction in the Faults, but the greateſt imaginable in the Virtues and commendable Qualities of others.

8. The acts of this Grace are always in ſeaſon, whereas thoſe extraordinary Gifts of Prophecy, &c. have their periods and particular occaſions.

The EPISTLE.

1 Cor. xiii.

1. *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal.*

2. *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.*

3. *And though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

4. *Charity ſuffereth long, and is kind, Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up,*

5. *Doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil;*

6. *Rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth;*

7. *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

8. *Charity never faileth; But whether there be Prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether there be tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be knowledge, it ſhall vaniſh away.*

9. *For we know in part, and we propheſie in part.*

9. For the utmoſt we know, even when thus enlightned, is very imperfect, and ſhort of that which we ſhall know hereafter.

10. *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be done away.*

10. And therefore when that Imperfection and thoſe Occaſions, to which theſe Aſſiſtances of the Spirit are vouchſafed, ſhall be at an end, there is an end of them too. So that they are plainly temporary, and never meant, as Charity is, to continue always.

11. *When I was a child I ſpake as a child, I underſtood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childiſh things.*

12. *For now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known.*

13. *And now abideth Faith, Hope, and Charity, theſe three; but the greateſt of theſe is Charity.*

13. Nay, even Faith and Hope, though excellent Virtues, are not yet equal to Charity. The preſent State indeed requires and exerciſes all the three; But, in the future State, the two former will be ſuperſeded by Viſion and Enjoyment, and Charity only will then remain.

Comment.

THE Epiſtle for this Day is, in ſubſtance, nothing elſe but a Commendation of Charity: conſiſting, Partly in a Preference given to it above other Gifts and Graces; and Partly in a Deſcription of it, by ſuch Effects and Properties, as demonſtrate the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the Virtue it ſelf. Concerning the *Firſt* of theſe I am not at liberty to treat. This being the Proper time for making good a former Promiſe, of explaining the Nature of Charity, and wherein it truly conſiſts. Reſerving therefore the Præeminence of this Grace above the reſt, to be ſhewn at an Occaſion already laid out for that purpoſe; I chooſe to confine my thoughts at preſent, to thoſe Marks and Qualities mentioned in this Chapter, which may give us a juſt Notion of the thing; and conſequently enable us to form a right Judgment, whether our Souls be of that frame and

Vol. 1. pag. 5.

temper, ſo neceſſary to our Salvation and Acceptance with God, that the higheſt Attainments without it, ſhall, we are told here, *profit us nothing*.

Verſe 1, 2, 3.

It hath been obſerved heretofore *, that Charity, properly ſo called, is that Affection of the Mind, whereby we love God for his own ſake, and our Neighbour for God's ſake. That This is the Principle, which diſtinguiſhes it from ſuch a Love, as either the tenderneſs of Nature, or nearneſs of Blood, or Friendſhip and Acquaintance, or Convenience and Intereſt, are apt to diſpoſe us to. And, how eſſential this Principle is, the Apoſtle here informs us, when ſuppoſing, that a Man may *give* even *all his goods to feed the poor*, without any true Chriſtian-love to his Brethren; and his *body to be burned*, without any true Love of God. If then the moſt ſpecious Inſtances in either ſort; ſuch as Martyrdom, and Devoting a Man's whole Subſtance to the Relief of them that want, are no neceſſary Proofs of this Virtue; It follows, that the Grace here ſo highly recommended, does not conſiſt in any outward Acts, but in the inward Diſpoſition of the Heart: And, that thoſe Acts are no farther of any value, than as they proceed from, and are ſanctified by, this Diſpoſition.

* Vol. 1. pag. 6. Vol. 2. Pag. 53.

Verſe 3.

It was therefore fit for St. *Paul*, after having hinted, that the Connexion between thoſe Inſtances, which ſeem to be the moſt perfect in their kind, and that Grace they ſo nearly reſemble, is not ſo cloſe and neceſſary, as will warrant us from the Former, certainly to infer the Latter; It was fit, to aſſign ſome Characters, which may prevent any dangerous Miſtakes in judging of this Matter. So that, where theſe are found, we may be confident the Face of Religion ſuch Behaviour carries is Genuine; and where theſe are not, how pompous ſoever the Appearance

pearance be, we may assure our selves, it is but counterfeit.

This is the use to be made of those Properties specified at the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Verses; Not so much for the judging other People, and the State of Their Souls, (which do not much concern us, except so far as we may help and direct their Endeavours to judge and understand themselves) as for the preventing any false Confidences, and setting us right in the Notions of our own. And, to this purpose, I shall make it my Business to explain these Qualities, in such a manner, as the Limits expedient for this Discourse will allow; far from such, as so noble and profitable a Subject deserves.

The First of these is, that *Charity suffereth long*; By which is meant, that They, who have this Virtue, are not apt quickly, and upon slight Occasions, to conceive a displeasure, much less to meditate Revenge, against those who behave themselves ill toward them. They consider, how subject to Failings Mankind are, how easily betrayed by Infirmity and Surprise, and Passion, to Things that mis-become them; They make just Allowances for Inadvertencies and Indiscretions, and suppress their Resentments for the Wrongs that are manifest, so long as they continue to be tolerable. And herein they differ from the Jealous and Captious, the Peevish and Hasty; who either fancy themselves injured or affronted, when nothing like it was done or intended; Or take Fire at every little Provocation or Neglect.

2. The Charitable Person *is kind*. He is so far from *rendring evil for evil*, that he labours to *overcome evil with good*. His Temper and Conversation is sweet and obliging; As he is slow in taking just Offence, so he is sure never to give any. His constant Aim and Endeavour is to be as beneficial as possibly he can. Quite contrary to that deviliſh and malicious Disposition,

ſition, too viſible and common in the World, which is continually employed in Miſchief; diſturbing the Quiet, and obſtructing the Advantage of its Neighbours; And rendring Men, whom Nature and Religion intended for mutual Helps and Comforts, continual Plagues and Torments to each Other.

3. *Charity envieth not.* A Perfection ſtill higher than the former. For many, who with-hold their Hands from doing harm, can yet be well enough pleaſed with ſeeing it done; eſpecially to thoſe for whom they have no Affection. But He, that is truly Charitable, takes a real Satisfaction in the Happineſs of Others. If God vouchſafe them larger Meaſures of Knowledge, or Virtue, or Riches, or Credit, or Honour; In a word, of any Bleſſing, Temporal or Spiritual; He grudges it not, murmurs not at it; is perfectly contented with the Preference this gives ſuch above himſelf, and feels a freſh Delight in obſerving the Glory of the Giver advanced, and the Ends of the Gift anſwered, whoever they be, who are choſen for the Inſtruments of bringing it about, and how much ſoever his own Endowments and Reputation ſhall happen to be eclipſed by Their brighter Luſtre.

4. As Charity regulates our Affection toward Others, ſo does it likewiſe moderate that to our Selves; And therefore the next Quality, by which it is diſtinguiſhed, is that of *not Vaunting*. The word is in the Original obſcure and ambiguous, but ſeems here chiefly to denote Sedateneſs and Prudence, Meekneſs and Modeſty; Not being raſh and forward, and aſſuming; *Not exerciſing our ſelves in Matters too high for us*, as *David* expreſſes it, (*Pſal.* 131.) nor thruſting into Buſineſs, above our Capacity and proper Sphere. By this we preſerve Order and publick Peace, and contentedly keep within the Bounds of that Station, which the Providence of God hath called us to. Pri-

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vate Men are satisfied with Obeying, and Those who have no lawful Authority with Learning; The One does not aspire to Government in the State, nor the Other usurp the Office of Teachers in the Church: For, where these Things are inordinetely arrogated, the Persons guilty of it, betray a Spirit manifestly defective in this Divine Virtue, by aiming at Posts which they are by no means qualified for, and so introducing Mischief and Confusion.

5. Nor does this only restrain Men from pretending to Talents they have not, but prevents their being exalted even with those they have. It teaches them to consider these, as they are, Gifts and Graces. If these are Spiritual, and such as Religion is immediately concern'd in, I have taken another Occasion to shew, that they minister very great Ground for Humility, and Thankfulness, and all imaginable Care to answer the Purposes they are entrusted with us for; but not the least for Vanity and Self-conceit. If they be those of Person, or of Fortune, we have yet less reason to be proud of them. Because the Value and Consequence of These to us is not near so much, the Freedom of the Gift is the same, and the Dangers and Temptations attending them, more. So great an Abuse it is of Blessings of every sort, to *be high minded* upon their account: So right a Use of them to *fear*, lest by our Negligence and Mis-employment, they prove at last to have been bestowed in vain.

It may perhaps be inquired, how Pride and a High Conceit of our own Merit, or Abilities, which seem to determine in our selves, and to hurt no Body else, come to have any influence upon the Duty of Charity, which manifestly regards some other Person. The Reasons are but too evident, whether we apply them to the Love of God, or that of our Neighbour. It must be opposite to Charity in the *former* Sense, as it

it leſſens His Goodneſs in our Eyes, by the very ſame Proportions that it raiſes our Own: For the more we attribute to our own Strength or Deſert, the more we plainly take off from the largeneſs of his Mercy, and conſequently from our Obligations to love and ſerve him in return for that Mercy. And Pride can never conſiſt with Charity in the *latter* Senſe, becauſe *high* and *great* are in Truth relative Terms, and imply a Compariſon with ſomething elſe: So that it is not poſſible for a Man to repreſent himſelf thus, without repreſenting his Brethren at the ſame time little and low. The conſequence whereof muſt needs be, failure in the Affection firſt, and then in all the outward Marks of it, which are, but he who proceeds upon a falſe Computation does not reckon to be, their due. Whereby we may perceive, how juſt a Method, and how ſuitable to the Nature and Order of Things, the Apoſtle goes in here, when inſtancing, as the next Character of Charity,

6. That it *Doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly.* It brings Men off from that Haughtineſs and Scorn in Converſation, which is ſo nauſeous and offenſive, and ſo certain an effect of their being too full of themſelves: For in this, as in all other Caſes, a Man's Deportment will be governed by the reigning part of his Mind; and, where that is the Paſſion of vicious Self-love, no other Perſon muſt expect fair Quarter. Quite otherwiſe the Virtue we are contemplating; It renders Men engaging and acceptable, chooſes much rather to forego or over-look a great deal, than to inſiſt upon what it might in rigour require; It exceeds all the Poliſhings of the World, becauſe what They direct for Decency and Appearance, This practiſes ſincerely. And is ſo courteous without Affectation, ſo condeſcending without Intereſt or Deſign, that, (according to St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Interpretation of the Word) it thinks no good Office, though never ſo

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mean, below or mis-becoming it; but reckons whatever Inconvenience such kind Humiliations may occasion, amply compensated by the Benefit which accrues to Others from them. Imitating herein that most perfect Pattern of Charity, the Blessed Son of God, who vouchsafed to wash his Disciples Feet; nay, who, for the common Advantage of Mankind, did not disdain Poverty and Affliction, Reproach and publick Infamy, though They, for whom he stoopt so low, had deserved no Consideration, except that of Divine Justice and Vengeance at his Hands.

7. Nor can we wonder, that Charity should be so liberal of its Services, so little nice in submitting to them, without those Distinctions, by which Men are apt to be discouraged from promoting the Advantage of their meaner Brethren, when informed, that another of her Characters is not to *seek her own*. A Form of Speech made use of by St. *Paul*, to denote, not that necessary Care and Concern for our private Benefit, which Religion allows and requires, and which Nature perswades in the first place: But such an inordinate pursuit of this, as narrows the Object of our Desires and Endeavours, and confines them to our Selves, exclusive of all Others. Thus he exhorts (Chap. x. 24.) *Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth.* Thus he propounds his own Practice as their Pattern, *In not seeking his own profit, but the profit of many*, (Chap. x. 33.) And thus he complains, That all *sought their own, not the things which are Jesus Chirists*, (Phil. ii. 21.) The Disposition then, which he clears Charity of in this place, is that vicious and selfish one, which looks no farther than its personal Interest; which never considers one as a Member of Society, but stands perfectly single, and is so far from placing or seeking its Private in the Common Good, that it would stick at no Methods of purchasing the former, at the Expence and certain Loss of

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the latter. The contrary Virtue, implied and recommended by this Character, is ſuch a generous and publick Spirit, as expects and endeavours our own in the General Good; That largeneſs of Heart, which is ſenſibly affected for Humane Nature, wiſhes the Eaſe and Proſperity of all Mankind, never ſeparates it ſelf from the Body by abſtracted Views, but conſiders each Member of Them as a part of Us; Contributes its utmoſt to ſerve and profit the Whole; And eſteems the Glory of God, and the greater Gain of our Brethren, an ample Reward of our own Labours, and Sufferings, and tolerable, nay (upon ſo beneficial an account) even eligible Loſſes and Inconveniences.

8. *Charity is not eaſily provoked*, ſo our Tranſlation reading, hath repreſented this in meaning much the ſame with the firſt Quality of *ſuffering long*. But the Word thus rendred does not ſo properly import the ſuddenneſs, as the ſharpneſs of a Paſſion. And the thing intended here ſeems to be, that this Grace keeps the Mind calm and ſmooth; corrects that Heat, which either the Natural Conſtitution, or the Greatneſs of a Provocation, kindles in our Breaſts; and, even when our Anger is moſt juſt, prevents its flameing out with that Rage and Fury, ſo common in Men who are not under this Guard. Nor is it hard to diſcern a very Natural Connexion between this and thoſe good Fruits laſt taken notice of. For, as nothing does ſo expoſe us to the Inſults of Paſſion, as Pride, and Partiality to one's own Intereſt; ſo are true Humility, and Generoſity, in no one Inſtance more conſpicuous, than in that of curbing and ſubduing this wild Beaſt within us, and always preſerving the Decency of Men, and the Moderation of Chriſtians, towards them, who may have deſerved the higheſt of our Reſentments, but have not by that releaſed us from the Duty of remembring, that They too ſtill are Men, and carry, (though perhaps very unworthily)

thily) the Title of Christians. And consequently have in both respects a right to be treated as Fellow-Members with our selves.

9. Charity *thinketh no evil:* Does not harbour malicious and revengeful Thoughts, (say some) as many are seen to do, who dissemble their Passion, but are full of lurking Mischief, and only wait an Opportunity of making Those pay dear, who have disobliged or injured them: And thus the Greek word here is often used, for putting any Fault to account, in opposition to discharge and forgiveness. Or, (as Others) it keeps a Man from suspecting and thinking the worst of Others and their Actions. Of the good they do, it allows all just Commendation, and is ready to acknowledge it; but, as it never charges any with doing amiss, except upon undeniable Evidence; so when they plainly appear to have done so, it makes all possible allowances in their Favour, and is as ready to excuse or extenuate it.

10. The Next of *not rejoycing in Iniquity, but rejoycing in the Truth,* is likewise capable of different Constructions. If by Iniquity or Injustice we understand the Evil others do, the Charitable Man hath so utter an Abhorrence of Wickedness, so high an Honour for God, who is disobeyed and affronted, so tender a Regard for the Souls of his Brethren, whose eternal Salvation is brought into apparent Hazard, and their Consciencies wounded, by it; that no Consideration can be equivalent to those, or make their Sin occasion of Joy to him. On the other hand, the truest Satisfaction he takes, is in the increase and advancement of Piety and Virtue, the Manifestation of God's Glory, the Propagation and Flourishing of Religion, and those Promises and Prospects of his Neighbours being for ever happy, which the pleasing Observation of their good Life sets before him.

If by Iniquity be taken the Evil of Suffering, thus the Charitable Man hath Compaſſion for all, but delight in none. But, if applied (as often in the Old Teſtament, and as its Oppoſition ſeems to warrant, if not to direct here) to Falſhood or Lies; thus it declares the Perſons here deſcribed to take no pleaſure in falſe Reports, and malicious Inſinuations, which tend to defame or diſparage our Neighbour. (A Pleaſure as common as it is barbarous.) But, when ſuch Suggeſtions have got Ground, and ſhed their Venome, to be heartily glad of hearing the injured Sufferers Innocence vindicated, and his Good Name reſcued from all the Scandal, that Malice or Miſtake had blackned him with.

11. And, ſince no Man induſtriouſly contributes to Events, that are diſagreeable to him; a neceſſary Conſequence of the former Quality, is that of *Bearing all Things*. The putting up many Things, which cannot be called to account, without loſs of our Neighbours Credit; and concealing thoſe very Faults we certainly know, even Multitudes of them. So far is Charity from expoſing Mens Failings to the World, or thinking it ſelf at liberty to make them the Subject of publick Diſcourſe, the Jeſt or the Diverſion of all Companies, even for Matters too foul to be excuſed, and too notorious to be denied.

12. This, God knows, is a degree of Reſerve and Tenderneſs too rarely to be met with; and therefore, to keep clear of Blame, by being too eaſily perſwaded to think ill of thoſe, who ſuffer by them who have it not; Charity *believes all Things*, that is, it inclines to credit all that can be ſaid in favour of them that are ill ſpoken of, ſo far as any reaſonable grounds for ſuch Belief offer. For, as this cannot be meant of a forwardneſs to believe to our Brother's Prejudice; ſo neither are we to imagine, that Charity bereaves Men of Judgment, and Common Senſe, by diſpoſing us to

believe,

believe, to our Brother's Advantage, things, which, though it could wish were true, yet are found, upon enquiry, to be supported by no probability or colour of Truth.

13. And yet, when Things are come to this miserable pass, it *hopeth all Things*. Though Men are plainly discovered to have been as bad, as Report (and Report is seldom short on the Reflecting part) hath represented them, the Charitable Man does not give them over so. He does not despair of, he wishes, and heartily prays for, and by all proper Methods labours to bring about their Amendment. Far from that supercilious and severe Disdain, which presently delivers up such for lost, pronounces them Reprobates, and forgets the Powers and the Condescensions of that Divine Grace, which in wonderful Mercy snatches them out *of the snare of the Tempter*, who *have* long *been taken Captive by him at his Will*.

14. Lastly, Though many Attempts of this kind have been fruitless, and a world of good Offices been paid with very ill Returns, still Charity continues unwearied, and can away with Injuries and Delays, grievous to be born, in hopes that God will at last open the Eyes of the very worst, and give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth. And this I conceive intended, when St. *Paul* describes it, as *enduring all Things*. By all Things, (in this, as well as in the former Instances) meaning, not simply all, but such as are agreeable to the Measures and End of Charity. For there are Times and Circumstances, which render the covering, or the suffering Men's Faults, an injury to themselves, or to others, or to both. And therefore these are Terms to be restrained, according to the Exigencies of the Case; And so to be apply'd to the Benefit of the Party concerned, as not to interfere with his own greater, or the publick Good.

Some indeed have explained theſe laſt Characters, ſo as to concern that Charity, which hath God for its immediate Object; and made them to import, Faith in his Revelations, Truſt in his Promiſes, Patience and Conſtancy under the afflicting Diſpenſations of his Providence. The Senſe is true, but ſeems not proper to this place. St. *Paul*, in appearance, deſigning to confine himſelf within the Inſtances of Charity to our Neighbour, in purſuance of his Argument handled in the Twelfth Chapter, and to ſhew, how juſtly he gave the upper hand to this Virtue, by declaring it more excellent than all thoſe boaſted Gifts of the Spirit, which They were tempted to covet ſo much rather. To which purpoſe he proceeds to obſerve the perpetual Uſe and Neceſſity of This, whereas the Reſt were beſtowed only upon certain Occaſions and Emergencies; And its Continuance in our future and perfect State, whereas All elſe were only Helps and Reliefs to our preſent Imperfections. But of theſe Præeminencies more at large hereafter.

Verſe 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,

That which I rather chooſe to preſs in the mean while, is a ſerious Examination of our Selves by theſe Characters. Well were it, I ſhould think, upon every Preparation to our Great Feaſt of Love at the Lord's Table, theſe four Verſes were laid open, and made the Standard of our Enquiry upon the Article of Charity. The uſe of ſuch a Method would be of infinite Uſe, in order to underſtand, and to amend our ſelves; that ſo we may not live on under a fatal Deceit, and falſly imagine we are Something, when in truth we are Nothing. For Nothing we are, and no better, if we have not Charity; And Charity we have not, if we have not theſe Marks to ſhew for it. The neceſſity of this Virtue is ſo generally allowed, that all Men flatter themſelves with an Opinion of poſſeſſing it; Inſomuch, that I can hardly recollect

One,

One, in all the private Conferences I have been called to, that would of his own accord confeſs the want of Charity. And yet its Nature is ſo little underſtood, or ſo little conſidered, that few, I doubt, are to be found, who truly have it. If we value our Attainments in religious Knowledge, if our liberality to the Poor, if our readineſs to die for the Truth, (and yet how many are there able to go thus far?) this Scripture declares, they are of no value without Charity; and that none of theſe is it: That neither the Peeviſh, nor the Doer of no good, nor the Livers to themſelves, nor the Envious, nor the Ambitious, nor the Self-conceited, nor the Inſolent and Haughty, nor the Selfiſh and Narrow-ſpirited, nor the furiouſly Angry, nor the evil Surmiſers, nor the ſevere Cenſurers, nor the Delighters in Scandal, nor the Spreaders of it, nor the raſh Believers of it when they hear it, are any of them Charitable: Conſequently, none of theſe Peoples Religion, what degree of it ſoever they pretend to, ſhall profit them any thing. And if ſo, What a dreadful caſe are unconceivable Numbers in, who think all ſafe and well with them? How ought this to awaken us? How to quicken our care in ſearching, and diſcovering, and avoiding a ſecret Danger, which ſome of us perhaps never dreamt of till this Moment? How ſeaſonably does our Church place this Epiſtle in the front of Lent, to prevent Mens deluding their Souls with the Severities of that Holy Seaſon; As if They, though never ſo Pompous and Auſtere, would avail, when deſtitute of this comprehenſive Grace, this indiſpenſable Condition of Salvation? How wiſely hath She inſtructed us, how zealouſly ought We, to pray, and never leave off wreſtling with God, till our Prayer be granted; *That he would pour into our Hearts that moſt excellent Gift of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues,* leſt living *without this,* we be at

last *counted dead before Him.* Hear us, O Lord, and whatever thou denieſt us, deny us not this One thing needful for us, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. *Amen.*

The Sunday called Quinquageſima ; *Or, the Next Sunday before* Lent.

PARAPHRASE.

31. 32. 33. * In the way from the Village, whither our Lord had retired, from that Malice and Rage, which the Miracle of raiſing *Lazarus* had ſo highly provoked; and preſently before his triumphant Entry into the City. Compare *John* xi. 53, 54. *Matth.* xx. 17. *Mark* x. 32.

34. Theſe were things ſo contrary to their Notions of the Meſſiah, that they could not believe, and knew not what to make of them. Compare *Matth.* xvi. 22.

35. 36. 37. Not far from *Jericho*, a famous blind Man (probably the Son of *Timæus*) who is ſpoken of here ſingly; though another (but of leſs Note) ſeems to have been healed with him.

38. * Thou the Meſſiah, whoſe Character is foretold as a Giver of Sight to the Blind, *Iſai.* xxxv. 5.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xviii. 31.

31. *THEN Jeſus took unto him the twelve, and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man ſhall be accompliſhed.*

32. *For he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on:*

33. *And they ſhall ſcourge him and put him to death, and the third day he ſhall riſe again.*

34. *And they underſtood none of theſe things, and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.*

35. *And it came to paſs, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man ſat by the way-ſide begging.*

36. *And hearing the multitude paſs by, he aſked what it meant.*

37. *And they told him that Jeſus of Nazareth paſſeth by.*

38. *And he cried, ſaying, Jeſus, * thou ſon of David, have mercy on me.*

39. *And they which went before rebuked him, that he ſhould hold his peace; but he cried ſo much the more, Thou ſon of David have mercy upon me.*

40. *And*

40. *And Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near him he asked him,*

41. *Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.*

42. *And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight, * thy faith hath saved thee.*

43. *And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

42. 43. * Thy Faith hath rendred thee a proper Object of this Mercy.

Comment.

WHat could be more to the purpose of our present Devotions, than for the Church to put us now in mind of our Dear Redeemer's Sufferings and Death? The Epistle for the Day hath described and recommended to us the Grace of Charity: The Gospel sets before our Eyes the noblest and most perfect Pattern of it. The Fast draws on, in which our sinful Souls are to be humbled before God; It is in virtue of this Death alone, that we can hope for Pardon. Those Humiliations are to help every Disciple of Jesus to die to the World, and in Conformity to his Death it is, that we stand obliged to *Crucify our Affections and Lusts.* Our great Example kept his Death constantly in view, and They, who imitate him, as they ought, will live in perpetual Prospect of, and Preparation for, their own. Upon so many Accounts is this a proper Subject for our present Meditations. And, in regard the History and Circumstances of our Lord's Passion are reserved to a farther Occasion, the Warning given his Disciples of it is chosen as more seasonable at this time. Some improvement whereof I hope may be made, by imploying our Thoughts,

I. *First*, Upon the Occasions chosen by our Lord, to foretel his approaching Sufferings and Resurrection.

II. *Secondly*, Upon the different manner in which this was done. But,

III. *Thirdly*, and principally, Upon the Reaſons, which ſeem to have moved him to it.

I. I begin with the particular Times and Occaſions, choſen by our Bleſſed Lord, to forewarn the Diſciples of his approaching Sufferings and Reſurrection.

1. The firſt Intimation of this kind, taken notice of by the Evangeliſts, was in the Coaſts of *Ceſarea Philippi*; When *Peter*, to our Lord's Queſtion, What the reſt of the World, and They, thought of him, reply'd; *Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God.* This glorious Teſtimony when Jeſus had recommended, as a Truth inſpired from Heaven, and charged them to keep that a Secret, for ſome Time, He *began from that time forth*, ſays St. *Matthew*, *to ſhew unto his diſciples, how that he muſt ſuffer many things*; and ſo on.

Matth. xvi. 16. 21. Luke ix. 18. 22.

2. The Next we meet with, follows immediately after his Transfiguration in the Mount: where three Apoſtles, the ſelect Companions of his Privacies, were admitted *Eye witneſſes of his Majeſty*, and *heard a voice out of the excellent glory*, proclaiming him *the beloved Son of God*. Deſcending from thence, he gave a freſh proof of his Divine Power, by diſpoſſeſſing the miſerable Lunatick, which his Diſciples left behind had found themſelves unable to do. And then proceeds to put them, a *Second* time, in mind of what ſhould ſhortly happen to him.

2 Pet. i. Matth. xvii. 1. to 23. verſe. Luke ix. 28. 45.

3. The *Third* warning is this now before us, and the laſt before the Evening in which he was actually betray'd. Of which the Remark principally to be made, is, That it appears moſt probably (from the Parallel Texts in the Paraphraſe) to have been given, between the time of raiſing *Lazarus* from the dead,

dead, and that of his triumphant Entry into *Jeruſalem.*

II. The different manner of our Lord's imparting this aſtoniſhing Truth comes next to be conſidered; Which, by comparing the ſeveral Paſſages, ſeems to be done gently, and by degrees. At firſt in general Terms, *The Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected, and be ſlain, and be raiſed the third day*; The *Second* warning comes enforced with this ſolemn Preface, *Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears, for the Son of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men.* This *Third* deſcends to a more particular Deſcription of that Tragical Scene, that *he ſhould be delivered to the Gentiles, and mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on*; and that they *ſhould ſcourge him, and put him to death* (a death inflicted by Theirs, not by the *Jewiſh* Law) *and the third day he ſhould riſe again.* So that, in proportion as theſe things drew nearer, more full and diſtinct Diſcoveries were made of them.

Matth. xvi. 21. Luke ix. 22. Luke ix. 44.

Verſe 32, 33.

III. I now proceed to the *Third* and moſt material Conſideration; The Reaſons, which ſeem to have moved our Lord thus to impart theſe things to his Diſciples.

1. One great Inducement, no queſtion, was, to arm his Diſciples againſt the Calamities coming upon them. For *the ſhepherd to be ſmitten*, and the *ſheep to be ſcattered*, was a diſtreſs deplorable at beſt, and would ask all their Strength and Preparation to ſupport it. But much leſs difficulties, when they ruſh upon us unawares, ſupply in ſuddenneſs what they want in weight, and bear down our Reaſon by ſurprizing it. This is the Condition of Humane Nature, and of Adverſity in general. And how great ſoever the Conſternation of theſe Diſciples was, upon their Maſter's Paſſion; it muſt, in all likelihood, have ſeiz'd them more violently,

lently, and have ſat longer and heavier upon their Spirits, had the thing been altogether new and unheard of. Accordingly we find this notice had ſome, though not all the Operation one might have expected. They ſeem at the time to have been ſtunn'd with the Blow, but by degrees they began to recollect, and upon Chriſt's Reſurrection the remembrance of his Warnings was awaken'd, and the true import of them underſtood. He therefore, who knew and felt our Infirmities, ſhewed this Compaſſion to them; as ſenſible, that a Calamity unforeſeen is neither ſo reſolutely ſupported, nor ſo quickly recovered, as one whoſe advances toward us we have fair warning of, and time to make ſomewhat of proviſion againſt.

2. Another probable Reaſon for theſe Intimations may be, the correcting the Miſtakes of his Diſciples, concerning that Splendour and Kingly Power, in which they expected the *Meſſiah* to appear. The manner of St. *Paul*'s entertaining our Lord's firſt Prediction of this kind diſcovers, that they thought ſuch Sufferings a contradiction to his Character. And the times I have already obſerv'd to have been ſingled out for this mortifying News, ſeem to ſay, that it was then moſt neceſſary and ſeaſonable to be acquainted with it, when ſome more than ordinary Teſtimony of his Divine Excellencies had put them under temptation to think ſuch a death impoſſible, and gave a better countenance to thoſe Errors in this matter, which had before prepoſſeſſed them.

Matt. xvi.

3. Theſe Warnings were of ſingular uſe toward removing the ſcandal of the Croſs. As upon theſe following accounts eſpecially.

1. In regard they proved our Lord's Death to be voluntary. The Diſciples, in planting the Goſpel, found no prejudice run ſtronger againſt them, than that of a Saviour and Lord confeſs'd to dye Ignominiouſly

ouſly, in the quality of the vileſt Slave, and moſt deteſtable Malefactor. And indeed, that a Life of ſo much Power ſhould end in ſo much ſeeming weakneſs and deſertion: That He to whom Angels were ſaid to pay Homage, and whoſe Commiſſion God himſelf had publiſhed in Thunder: He, who had check'd Diſeaſes with a Word, and forced Death to deliver back his Prey; ſhould be bound, and ſcourged, and crucified himſelf, might well be thought a moſt amazing Turn, and an Eclipſe upon the Glory of his former Miracles. It had certainly been ſo, ſuppoſing thoſe Indignities and Sufferings to be a conſtraint upon him. But now that Difficulty vaniſhes; Theſe Warnings prove his Power the ſame ſtill; That his Enemies had no advantage over him but by his own permiſſion; That he diſtinctly knew and choſe all this. So aſſerting at once his Power, and his Love, in making good that declaration to the *Jews*, *No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of my ſelf. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* John x. 18.

2. The ſcandal of the Croſs is hereby removed, as theſe things are declared exactly agreeable to the antient and moſt authentick Prophecies concerning the *Meſſias*. Hence our Lord ſo often appeals thither. So here, *all things that are written by the prophets concerning the ſon of man ſhall be accompliſhed.* And, *the ſon of man goeth as it is written of him.* Verſe 31. Matt. xxvi. 24. And a World more to the ſame purpoſe. The frequency whereof, and the mighty ſtreſs laid upon them, in this preſent Caſe particularly, make it not amiſs to try, if I can in few Words explain, how the Authority of Prophecies comes to be ſo very venerable upon this account.

In order hereunto, let it be remember'd, that the Redemption of Mankind was an Act of God's Free Grace. The whole Deſign, and the contrivance of it was entirely His. The Sacrifice of his Son, though not actually

actually offer'd till theſe laſt Days, was yet available for former Ages; To whom he therefore gave ſuch proſpects of it, as he ſaw fit, and ſufficient for Their Circumſtances. Theſe Diſcoveries had a double uſe. They laid the Foundations of Faith in Chriſt to come: and when accompliſh'd, they were the Signatures and Diſtinctions of Chriſt already come. The accompliſhment of things thus foretold was therefore neceſſary, becauſe God had pledg'd his Truth for them, and ſuſpended Mens Salvation upon their Belief in Him as the *Meſſiah*, whom ſuch Events ſhould mark out to them. But then that neceſſity depended on another; which was the Original Scheme of this wonderful Work, formed in the Divine Mind. As theſe things came to paſs then, becauſe they had been thus foretold; ſo were they likewiſe thus foretold, becauſe the wiſe purpoſe of God had determin'd, that they ſhould thus come to paſs.

The whole then reſts at laſt in the immutable Counſel of God alone; and if ſo, what ground is left for taking offence at the Croſs of Chriſt? Hence, probably, our Saviour enlarges upon all the infamous Circumſtances of his Paſſion, that, how unaccountable ſoever in themſelves, or how unworthy of Him, we might judge them; yet One above, whoſe Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, and whoſe Hands cannot be tied up, or preſcribed to, might be ſhewn to have other Notions of them, and that every one of theſe Indignities were of Service to his Deſign.

Since then he did, for our ſakes, and of his own mere Goodneſs, engage in a Deſign ſo beneficial, ſhall We preſume to call him to account, and not acquieſce in His Methods of effecting it? We, forſooth, very pertly take upon us, to ſet up Standards of Juſtice, and Mercy, and Honour: and pretend to bring our Maker to the Rules and Ideas, thus crudely formed, of Prudence, and Equity, and a due *Decorum*. Vain Men!

Men! We attempt we know not what. The Myſtery of Man redeemed is a depth too vaſt for poor Mortals to fathom. But, could we comprehend the Reaſons of the Divine Mind, ſuch Beauty and Gracefulneſs would ſhine forth in every part, as muſt needs caſt us into St. *Paul*'s Rapture, *O the depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God!* Rom. ix. 33. As it is, while we are able to ſee ſo little, and that little ſo imperfectly, it will much better become the Condition of Creatures, eſpecially of ranſomed Sinners, thankfully to receive the Mercy, and humbly to adore the Wiſdom of God; than by the moſt deteſtably impious, nay moſt abſurd and ignorant preſumption, to arraign the Proceedings of a Being confeſſedly infinite in all Perfections; and undertake to amend the meaſures fixed by Him before the World was. So little reaſon have we to bluſh at, ſo much to Glory in, the Croſs of Chriſt.

3. Theſe Warnings contributed greatly to removing the ſcandal of that Croſs, by foretelling at the ſame time our Lord's Reſurrection. The *Jews* flatter'd themſelves with a *Meſſiah*, who ſhould make his entrance among them in Pomp and Magnificence, full of Spoils and Conqueſts. Our *Jeſus* was a victorious *Meſſiah*: Not ſuch indeed as they expected, but wherein he differed, his Atchievements and Glories were ſingular and more conſpicuous. For never was there ſuch a defeat given, never thought of before, as when Death was overcome by dying, diſarmed by one that ſeem'd its Prey and Priſoner, and all the Powers of Hell ſhaken and ſubdued by their own, as they thought proſperous, Stratagems. They, who attend to this impartially, muſt needs allow, and may in ſome degree diſcern, that the All-wiſe God conſulted the Honour of his Son, by a new, 'tis acknowledg'd, but certainly a moſt ſucceſsful Method. For, had he been leſs a Suffering, he had alſo in Proportion been a leſs glorious and triumphant, Saviour. *Laſtly*,

Laſtly, Theſe things were ſignified to the Diſciples, and not the common crowd of Followers, becauſe in Their Hands was depoſited the Treaſure of his Goſpel. It was Their Truſt and Office to teſtify what they had ſeen and heard, and particularly to vindicate his Memory, as to the manner and willingneſs of his Death. That this was not a thing of Compulſion but Choice, that none of theſe Events ſurpriz'd or confounded him: but that he knew them all, ſaw every ſtep they moved toward him, and met them with the utmoſt ſedateneſs and conſtancy of Mind, notwithſtanding all the Reluctancies of Humane Nature. To to this effect is that Charge given theſe Perſons after his Reſurrection; *Theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moſes, and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms, concerning me. And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.*

Luke xxiv. 44. 48.

The Sum of all is this. Whether we reflect upon the danger theſe Diſciples were in, of being oppreſs'd with an Affliction ſo ſenſible, as the death of their Maſter, and the Inſults and Malice of His and their Enemies; this Warning was exceeding ſeaſonable and kind, to prepare them for, and ſuſtain them under, ſo heavy a burden. Or, whether we regard the Epidemick Error concerning the *Meſſiah*'s firſt Appearance and Kingdom; theſe were contriv'd to rectify their Miſtakes about this matter. Or, whether the Scandal taken at a Crucified Lord; it was fit to ſhew, that his Death was voluntary, and ſo a demonſtration of infinite Goodneſs and Love: fit, to ſignify, by its agreement with the Prophecies, that this Deſign, and all the ſtrokes of it, were order'd by a wiſer Head than ours; even the Counſel and Appointment of God himſelf: fit, to repreſent the ſhame of our Lord's Crucifixion abundantly recompenſed by the Glories of his

his Reſurrection: fit laſtly, to take all poſſible care of thoſe, to whom ſo weighty a Truth was committed, and upon whoſe Teſtimony the ſucceſs of the Chriſtian Religion would in great meaſure depend.

The ſame Warning may bring conſiderable benefit to every Chriſtian, careful to improve it, as he ought, and may do. If he uſe it, as an occaſion to ſilence all impious Cavils and Scruples, raiſed by his own Curioſity, or ſuggeſted by the Prophaneneſs of others, to the diſparagement of the Chriſtian Inſtitution. If he learn hence to value, to admire, this moſt wiſe and glorious Diſpenſation: and adore the Condeſcenſion and Goodneſs of a ſuffering Saviour, who was content to undergo ſo much for Wretches ſo unworthy. If the Sight and Senſe of His Indignities and Wrongs, diſpoſe us to Patience and Meekneſs under our own. And, if the Conſideration of all the Inſolence and Barbarity, all the Shame and Pain our *Jeſus* underwent, ſtir us up to an holy Indignation and Revenge upon our Sins, the Cauſe, that he was thus expoſed, affronted, miſuſed; The Traytors, that with ſuch exquiſite torture ſcourg'd, and nailed, and crucified the Body, and with anguiſh unconceivable pierc'd the afflicted Soul, of the Son of God. If this, I ſay, provoke our Zeal, without remorſe, to execute the Duties of the approaching Seaſon: that is, by Abſtinence and Mortification, and true Repentance, to ſubdue and kill the old Man, and utterly to aboliſh the whole Body of Sin. Thus ſhall we now be partakers of his Death; Thus ſhall we alſo be partakers of his Reſurrection. *Amen.*

The

The First Day of Lent, *commonly called*, Ash-Wednesday.

The COLLECT.

Wisd. xi. 23,24. *Ezek.* xviii. 30. *Exod.* xxxiv. 7. *Psal.* li. 10. 17. *Luke* xxiv. 47.

ALmighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the Sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PARAPHRASE.

12. God still invites you to return to him, but then this must be done with sincere Repentance, with all the marks of Sorrow for your Sins, that Abstinence, and Tears, and bewailings of your Wickedness can give.

For the EPISTLE.

Joel ii. 12.

12. *TVrn ye even to me, saith the Lord, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.*

13. But rest not in those outward Testimonies, it is the grief of your Hearts that God requires. For which ye have this encouragement, that He is ready to do good, tender and affectionate, not easily provoked; and when he is so, capable of being appeased, and prevailed upon not to execute the vengeance he hath threatned.

13. *And rent your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

14. Perhaps it may not yet be too late, but he may still be entreated, not to destroy utterly, but mitigate at least our Punishment.

14. *Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering, and a drink-offering unto the Lord your God?*

15. In order hereunto, let your Humiliations be solemn and publick, like those in the Day of Atonement. (*Numbers* x. *Leviticus* xvi. 1.)

15. *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call the solemn assembly.*

16. Let all Ages and Conditions of People joyn in them, and no signs of Joy appear among you.

16. *Gather the people, sanctify the congregation: assemble the elders; gather the children, and those that suck the breasts, let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet;*

17. Let

17. *Let the prieſts, the miniſters of the Lord, weep between the poarch and the altar; and let them ſay, ſpare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen ſhould rule over them. Wherefore ſhould they ſay among the people, where is their God?*

17. Let the Prieſts intercede for the People in the Holy place, and humbly beſeech God, that he will not give up his own Inheritance to the mercy of Idolaters and Enemies, but for the ſake of his own Honour prevent thoſe impious Reflections, which their Inſolence will be apt to make on ſuch an occaſion, as if he had not Power to protect and defend them. (*Deut.* ix. 28. *Pſal.* lxxix. 8, 9, 10.)

Aſh-Wedneſday; *Or, The Firſt Day of* Lent.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matthew vi. 16.

16. *WHEN ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites, of a ſad countenance: for they diſfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward.*

PARAPHRASE.

16. Let not your faſtings be formal and Vain-glorious, like thoſe diſſemblers, who upon ſuch occaſions, either cover their Faces with a Veil, or by Melancholy Looks and Geſtures, draw the obſervation of others. Theſe Faſters have no farther recompence to expect.

17. *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy face.*

17. Do thou therefore, when humbling thy ſelf thus for thy Sins, wear thy Ornaments, uſual upon common Days.

18. *That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but unto thy father which is in ſecret: and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

18. Not at all ſollicitous whether Men take notice of thy Faſts or not; but careful to recommend thy ſelf to God, who is privy to thy moſt retired Devotions; and ſhall make thy Reward publick for thoſe good actions, which thou haſt kept ſecret.

19. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal.*

19. Let it not be thy buſineſs to heap up Treaſures in this World, for all ſuch are liable to decay, and may be taken from thee.

20. But

20. But by Acts of Mercy and Piety, (at the Times of Fasting especially) lay up Treasures in Heaven, be taken from thee.

20. *But lay up for your selves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

which can neither be spoiled, nor perish, nor

21. This is necessary to draw off thy Affections from this

21. *For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.*

World, for wherever that is which thou valuest most, there thy Desires and Mind will likewise center; In earthly Things, if those, upon heavenly, if these, be the Treasure thou esteemest, and preferrest in thy Choice.

COMMENT.

THIS is the Day, that enters us into that Season of Devotion and Humiliation, so solemnly observed, in the former and purer Ages of the Christian Church. A Season of more than ordinary Instruction heretofore, for informing new Converts in the Principles of Religion, that so they might come throughly qualified at *Easter*, to enter into Covenant with God by Baptism. A Season of Pennance and strict Discipline, for putting Them to publick Shame, whose open and notorious Breaches of that Covenant had given publick Scandal. And a Season of Recollection and Repentance to All; Who, though they had not reflected such Dishonour upon their Holy Profession, yet, by examining the state of their own Souls, would find occasion more than enough, for the Austerities usual at this time, to humble themselves for their Sins, to subdue the Flesh and its Appetites, to crucify themselves to the World and its Pleasures, to abstract and exalt their Affections, and thus, in a spiritual Sense, to die and rise again with their Saviour and Lord. The commemorating whose Death and Resurrection, this Season, and such religious Observance of it, were very reasonably esteem'd a fit Preparation for, and Introduction to.

The

The Coming in of the World into the Faith, and the charitable Care of admitting to Baptiſm Children of Believers early, and of adminiſtring that Sacrament at all Times of the Year without diſtinction, hath ſuperſeded the Firſt of *theſe* Uſes, in proportion as the Number of the Adult, who want it, and whoſe actual Sins require actual Repentance, is diminiſhed. That *This* End of the Lent-Faſt is not now anſwered, is our Happineſs; that the *Second* is not, is our unſpeakable Misfortune. Our Church, in the Service of this Day calls upon us to lament the Loſs, and to wiſh the Reſtitution, of that wholeſome Diſcipline, which partly the Abuſes of ſome later Ages, and partly the Degeneracy of the preſent have rendred ineffectual and impracticable. But the *Third* Uſe I mentioned will always continue; For this we ſhall ever have Need, ever Opportunity. The Chaſtiſing our ſelves is always in our power; and ought to be in practice ſo much more, as the decay of publick and judicial Chaſtiſement hath left us more in our own Hands. And a due preparation for the Lord's Supper at *Eaſter* calls for the ſame previous Care, in great meaſure, which that for Baptiſm did heretofore. Thus we in ſome degree may make our Profit of this Holy Seaſon, to all the Purpoſes abovementioned. And, had not a very punctual Obſervation of it been ſtill expected from us, the Church would not have choſen theſe Scriptures now to employ us. Both which I thought expedient to Treat upon at once, that ſo I may from thence be able, in one View, to ſet out the ſeveral Ingredients of a thorough and ſolemn Repentance, together with the Reaſons for, and Uſefulneſs of, Each of them.

Now Thoſe, as is manifeſt from the Scriptures appointed for the Epiſtle and Goſpel for the Day, are *Firſt*, Sincerity. *Secondly*, Sorrow for our paſt Faults. *Thirdly*, Abſtinence. *Fourthly*, Earneſt Prayer. *Fifthly*,

Almſ-giving. And, *Sixthly*, As a Qualification common to, and neceſſary to recommend all the reſt, That every one of theſe be free from Oſtentation and Vain-glory. Upon each of which my Deſign is ſo to Treat, as Firſt to explain the Nature of the Duty, and then to ſhew our Obligation to it.

1. I begin with *Sincerity*, implied more eſpecially in thoſe Two Commands. *Turn ye even unto me, ſaith the Lord, with all your heart*, and *Rent your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.* That Renting the Garment was a Ceremony cuſtomary with the Jews, to expreſs their Grief, either for ſome great Calamity that had befallen them, or for ſome heavy Judgment which they at that time were in dread of, is evident from a great many Texts in Scripture. Nor does it appear from any one Text, I know of, that God hath ever diſapproved of Mens expreſſing their Grief upon Religious accounts, by the ſame outward Teſtimonies as are uſed in common Caſes. But this indeed he abſolutely diſallows, that Men, upon ſuch Occaſions, ſhould put on a ſhew and face of Grief, where it is not; or reſt in the Sign, as if that alone were ſufficient, without regard to the thing it was intended to ſignify. This is the Prophet's, this our Saviour's meaning, that God is not to be impoſed upon with Pomp and Forms: That the Rending of the Heart is what he expects, and, that a Garment rent, where That is not, can be of no account with him. That there are ſome Circumſtances, when the outward Guiſe of Sorrow may be diſpenſed with, may be wiſely and much better let alone. So that the Inward Sorrow is not always of leſs, is ſometimes of more value, becauſe the outward Signs of it are wanting; But the Outward is never of any value at all, where the Inward is want-

Lev. i. 6.
Job i. 20.
—— ii. 12.
Ezra ix. 35.
2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.
Jerem. xxxvi. 24.
Matth. xxvi. 65.
Mark xiv. 63.

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ing. And to this purpoſe it is that we are to interpret that Phraſe of *Renting the heart, and not the garments*; not to forbid the *latter*, but (according to the propriety of the Hebrew Language) to prefer the *former*; So much to prefer it, that, if One muſt be undone, the *former* is of ſo great conſequence, that provided this be done effectually, it matters not, comparatively ſpeaking, whether the *latter* be done or not.

Compare Hoſ. vi. 6.

Thus *Turning to the Lord with all our heart*, is ſet to denote a ſerious and unfeigned Repentance, ſuch a thorough and total Change of Deſires and Affections, as the Scripture calls a *new Heart*, a *new Spirit*, and that which renders the Perſon in whom it is found a *new Creature*. When we do not only leave off to commit, but even to love Sin; When we find an inward Complacency in God and Goodneſs, and perform our Duty with Appetite and Delight. Without this we may have the *form*, but not the *power* of *Godlineſs*; Nor could ſuch Converſion be laſting, for nothing is ſo, that does not proceed from Inclination and Principle. Nature will ſoon return, and break looſe from its Conſtraint; And therefore, till that Nature be corrected, till the Heart it ſelf be changed; No change of Actions and Behaviour, however artfully put on for a while, can ever avail to the Ends of this Command, or deſerve the Name of Repentance.

And, as theſe outward Appearances alone can be of no ſervice to our Selves, ſo neither can they poſſibly be pleaſing to Almighty God. They cannot pleaſe him for this very Reaſon, becauſe unprofitable to our ſelves, and ineffectual for compaſſing the very End he aims at, which is no other, than our Change and Amendment. But there are other Conſiderations, which muſt render them highly diſplea-

ſing and abominable in his Sight. For all Diſſimulation whatſoever is, in its own Nature, ſo odious and vile, that nothing could prevail for the practice of it upon any account, except the hope of going undiſcovered. We allow our ſelves too great Liberties of this kind, in common intercourſe with one another; and make an ill uſe of the Certainty we have, that Men cannot enter into our Thoughts, and conſequently may be deceived by Management and Ceremony, fair Carriage, and large Profeſſions. But, if at any time this Mask be pluck'd off or ſeen through, no Affront is more highly, or more juſtly reſented; no Body more deteſted or deſpiſed, than the Flatterer or fawning Hypocrite. The Reaſon is, becauſe this does not only betray Falſhood and Baſeneſs in his own Temper; but is a plain Reproach to the Perſon he labours to put upon, argues a mean Opinion of his Judgment, and that he was believed weak and deſpicable enough to be abuſed and deceived without diſcerning it.

Now, if the Caſe ſtand thus in all Tranſactions between Man and Man; If We can ſo ill bear any Advantage to be taken of the Frailties and Infirmities, we are ſenſible, belong to us; How impious and inſufferable a Mockery muſt that be, which thinks any double dealing can paſs upon God, who hath them not? How do they bring him down to our poor Level, rob him of his nobleſt Perfections, forget thoſe Characters given of himſelf, that he is a *Searcher of hearts*, a *diſcerner of ſecrets*, that *there is not a word in our tongues, but he knows it altogether, nor a thought in our breaſts, but he underſtands it afar off?* How dare any Man entertain a Thought of trifling with ſuch a God? A God, who hath declared himſelf jealous of his Honour, in this point particularly? For, therefore is the Ungodly threatned with utter Deſtruction, *for taking* God's

Pſal. cxxxix.

covenant

covenant into his mouth, when at the ſame time *he hated to be reformed, caſt his words behind him*, and, becauſe not ſpeedily puniſhed for ſuch Hypocriſy, concluded *God to be ſuch a one as himſelf*. Therefore are the People of *Judah* given over to an amazing Deſtruction, ſuch as the Wiſdom of their wiſe Counſellors ſhould not be able to prevent; becauſe, though *they honoured God with their lips*, and *drew near to him with their mouth, yet their heart was all the while far from him*. This rendred all *their Worſhip vain*, and all their Endeavours of Eſcape fruitleſs, that *they ſought to hide their counſel from the Lord, and wrought in the dark*, and ſaid, *Who ſeeth us, and who knoweth us?* There were no end of expoſing the Abſurdity, the Wickedneſs, the Danger of diſſembling with God, or imagining, that the cunningeſt Diſguiſe can ſhelter the moſt lurking Corruption from his all-piercing Eye. Let *David* ſuffice to convince us of the Folly, and our Saviour, to ſhew us the Conſequence of it: The One reminding Men, that He who made them muſt needs have perfect Knowledge of them; The Other, by forewarning us, that *where the portion of Hypocrites is, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth*.

Pſal. l. 16—21.

Iſai. xxix. 13, 14, 15.

Pſal. xciv. Matth. xxiv. 51.

Theſe things are ſo exceeding manifeſt, both from expreſs Declarations of Scripture, and from the Reaſon of the Thing, that one would ſtand amazed at the Commonneſs of a Crime ſo heinous, a Deluſion ſo ſenſeleſs. And yet how generally it hath prevailed in the World, the Examples of many among the Heathen, of the Phariſees among the Jews, and of Multitudes among Chriſtians in every Age, and Place, are too melancholy, and too ſenſible, an Evidence. This muſt be attributed to the cunning Craftineſs of deſigning Men, contriving, for private Advantage, to cheat the Souls under their Care with falſe Notions

of Religion; and to the Folly of People, favouring this Deceit by giving into ſuch Schemes as flatter their favourite Vices, and ſubmitting to ſome Auſterities as meritorious, which, how mortifying and rigorous ſoever they appear, are yet in truth leſs grievous to Fleſh and Blood, than a thorough Change of Affections and Manners. A juſt Indignation againſt theſe Corruptions hath driven many into a contrary Extreme; and tempted them to reject all thoſe outward Marks of Repentance, ſo wretchedly abuſed by ignorant or ill-intending Men, as not only needleſs, but ſuperſtitious. Whereas indeed Theſe ſtill continue neceſſary; and when not made to ſupply the place of, but to expreſs and promote, Converſion of Heart, continue to oblige us. Such are the Particulars that follow here; Without the Change of the Mind and Actions, nothing; worſe than nothing; but with it, decent in Themſelves, profitable to Us, and acceptable to Almighty God. And therefore, having enlarged thus far, to ſecure the *Firſt* and main Point, Our Sincerity; I proceed to conſider the Reſt, which the Portions of Scripture now in hand enjoyn; and this Day, and the Seaſon uſhered in by it, do more eſpecially call for, in order to our more effectual Repentance.

2. The Next thing then to be ſpoken of is *Sorrow for our paſt Faults*. A Chriſtian muſt conſider the Concerns of his Soul very partially, or very ſlightly, not to ſee, and be fully convinced, that provoking God's Diſpleaſure, riſquing the Loſs of Heaven, and lying liable to *the Damnation of Hell*, are Calamities to be dreaded and lamented, infinitely above any, that the Croſſes or Diſappointments of this World can ever expoſe us to. The more, becauſe in One caſe we are often purely paſſive, but whatever befals us in the Other, we bring upon our ſelves; and, if we deal righteouſly, muſt at once lament, and condemn the

Sufferer. Let Men but think at all of this Matter, and they will find no need for my labouring to perſwade them, that they ought to be ſorry for their Sins. But, in regard every ſort of Sorrow may not be proper or effectual, I ſhall endeavour to ſay ſomewhat that may be uſeful upon this account, concerning the Motives, the Degree, and the End of that Sorrow commanded here, ſo far as the Scripture, I am treating of, furniſhes occaſion and hints for it.

I. As to the Motive, *Firſt*; The Connexion may ſeem a little ſtrange, that ſo ſolemn an Exhortation to *weeping, and mourning, and rending the heart*, ſhould be enforced with this Argument, *That God is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil.* Would not one have expected the Prophet at this time to have repreſented God by thoſe other Characters elſewhere given of him; *A great God, a mighty, and a terrible, that will by no means clear the guilty; whoſe eyes are open upon all the ways of the ſons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings?* Should not this rather have been preſſed upon them, *Turn ye unto the Lord your God*, for *if a man will not turn*, he will whet *his ſword, he hath bent his bow, and made it ready: He prepareth the inſtruments of death; He repayeth them that hate him to their face, to deſtroy them; He will not be ſlack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face?* Such a Method of reaſoning had no doubt been very agreeable to the Temper of hardned Sinners to awaken them out of their Security, and admoniſh them whom they have to deal with. But yet the manner of the Prophet's proceeding was certainly moſt ſeaſonable at that, and may eaſily be proved very inſtructive and uſeful at any, time, upon Theſe two accounts.

Deut. x. 17. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Jerem. xxxii. 19.

Pſal. vii. 12, 13. Deut. vii. 10.

1. Becauſe being ſorry for our Sins implies and preſuppoſes a ſenſe of the heinouſneſs of our Sins. Men never miſtake this Matter more unhappily, than when they imagine Sorrow to be either the finiſhing, or the firſt, Act of Repentance. In order to come to it regularly, we muſt examine into, and get ſome tolerable Knowledge of, the Number, the Quality, the ſeveral aggravating Circumſtances, of our Faults; the Majeſty of the Perſon offended by them, the Juſtice of his Anger, the diſmal Conſequences of it to our ſelves, the Vileneſs of the Facts that have provoked it. All which, when duly weighed, will be ſuch an Humiliation, as might rather tempt us to deſpair of Pardon, then leave any ground for Security or Preſumption. And therefore, to Perſons thus affected, all poſſible Aſſurances of God's Mercy and Readineſs to forgive are the Balm fit to be poured into theſe Spiritual Wounds. The Jews, addreſſed to by *Joel*, had felt ſome, and lived in fear of more and greater, Judgments: His buſineſs therefore was to encourage rather than to terrify; to repreſent their Caſe as not quite deſperate, and God, though incenſed, yet not implacable. The Condition of all ſorrowing Penitents is thus far the ſame, that they need Reſtoratives and Supports; they have already ſufficient feeling of their Diſeaſe, they mourn and languiſh under it; and do not want violent means to rouze them into a ſenſe of their Danger, but gentle Applications to raiſe and comfort their Spirits, and ſhew their State not paſt all Hope and Remedy.

2. This of the Prophet is a proper Motive of Sorrow, becauſe fixing it upon a Principle, the moſt likely to render our Converſion ſincere and durable. To grieve meerly for fear of Puniſhment is what the moſt carnal and worldly Mind is capable of. Almoſt every common Malefactor does thus much, when the

Scourge

Scourge or the Gibbet comes in ſight; but that the Villany of the Fact, and Concern for Juſtice, have no part in that Sorrow, the frequent Examples of Wretches, ſpared in the very Article of Death, and continuing ſtill incorrigible, too plainly demonſtrate. And I know not to what elſe we ſhould impute the many fruitleſs Remorſes, and broken Vows, of Affliction and Sick-beds, than that, proceeding purely from the ſmart of the Rod, and deſigning to get quit of preſent Fear and Pain; no ſooner the Cauſe ceaſes, but the Effects of their Sorrow vaniſh with it. Such Sorrow, proves, we love our ſelves, not that we love God. But he, that *turns with his whole heart*, muſt love God; And love God he cannot, without a perſwaſion of his Goodneſs; Goodneſs in his own Nature, Goodneſs to Him in particular. Theſe Attributes then are ſo many Charms to attract our Hearts. The greater Senſe we have of Them, the more we ſhall loath our ſelves, for having dealt ſo diſingenuouſly and unworthily heretofore: The better we think of Him, and the worſe of our Selves, upon this occaſion, the leſs apt we ſhall be to relapſe. For, though Repentance often begin with Fear, yet it ſeems hardly poſſible to conceive, how it ſhould be perfected, and perſevere, without Love.

Thus much for the Motives; Next for the Degree of the Sorrow, we are upon; deſcribed here by *Weeping*, and *Mourning*, and *Renting the Heart*. Theſe plainly teach us, that it ought to be very great. And indeed, if at all ſuitable to the Cauſe that provokes it, how is it poſſible to be otherwiſe? But then we muſt be careful to diſtinguiſh, between the Sorrow it ſelf, and the outward Significations. For our Paſſions, upon Religious, as well as other Occaſions, will have their Natural Courſe, and work differently upon Men, as their Tempers and Complexions differ. Some are ſo very tender, that the leaſt Con-

cern

cern will melt them into Floods; Some again ſo hard and tough, that the heavieſt Calamities cannot extort one Tear; Some find their Grief ſudden and violent, but ſoon overcome and forget it; Others bleed inwardly, feed upon their Miſery, and lie under long and heavy Oppreſſions. So vaſt a difference there is ſometimes, between what Men feel, and what they expreſs. And by conſequence, ſo liable are we to Miſtakes, when judging, either of Sorrow by its Appearances, or of the Effects afterward by the preſent Suffering, could even that be perfectly underſtood. Theſe Conſiderations I would recommend to thoſe, who give themſelves diſquiet, becauſe they cannot, like *David*, *waſh their Bed in the Night, and water their Couch with Tears*; That, from the Examples of ſuch mourning Penitents, they may do their utmoſt to be ſeriouſly and ſadly ſenſible of their Miſery and Folly; That if this Senſe affect them in the manner uſual with that of other great Troubles and Adverſities, though it come not up to the Standard of ſome eminent Patterns in Scripture, it is what they may very well be ſatisfied with: but eſpecially, that they ſhould remember, how deceitful Marks all theſe are to pronounce one's State by; and, that neither any viſible Teſtimonies, nor any inward Extremities and Anguiſh of Heart are valuable upon their own accounts: But the Degree, though never ſo great, is then, and never but then ſufficient, when it anſwers the Purpoſes expected from thence; ſo that, the main Thing to be attended to, in this Matter, is,

3. The End of ſuch Sorrow. For which we need go no farther than that Text of St. *Paul*, *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of.* Sorrow then is not Repentance, but produces it; Conſequently, like all other Means and Inſtruments, not uſed, or to be valued,

2 Cor. vii. 10.

for

for its own ſake, but for the ſake of that which comes of it. Joy and Grief are the two great Springs of Humane Actions, and, in proportion as we feel each of theſe ariſing, our Deſire or our Averſion is excited to the thing that cauſes it. In regard therefore, that Sin corrupts us by its treacherous Delights, and, by thus bribing the Senſual, draws over the Rational part into compliance; We cannot more effectually cut off thoſe Attacks, to which we are too much inclined to yield, than by ſo ordering Affairs, that thoſe very Tranſgreſſions, whoſe bait is Pleaſure, ſhall be found by our own Experience, when rightly underſtood, to carry ſo much pain and ſuch terrible Stings about them, that the *Honey in the Mouth* muſt be acknowledged too dear, too fooliſh a Bargain, when we are ſure to be afterwards upbraided by ſo great a Quantity of *Gall in the Stomach.* Since then our Affliction for having offended God, like all others, will, ſhould, more than any elſe, be very grievous to us; It is fit we balance the pleaſure of the Sin, with a Sorrow that may make us feel the folly of being ſeduced by it. And, in regard no Man cares to create his own torment, it follows, that the more painful Wickedneſs is, the leſs danger there will be of relapſing into it. But ſtill it is not the Anguiſh, but the Healing, of the Heart, that theſe Wounds and cuttings of it are directed to. Deep let them be, becauſe they muſt go to the bottom of the Sore, and fetch out the Corruption in order to a Cure; But if the Cure be wrought, the End is obtained, be the piercing and the pain more or leſs. To be plain, the moſt inconſolable Grief, if it change not the Man, in his Affections, and Purpoſes, and Actions, is altogether uſeleſs; and that which hath leſs of Smart may be of happy effect: For, to be ſure, He, and He only, is ſorry for Sin as he ought, who is ſo ſorry, as to ſin no more.

III. What

III. What hath been ſaid upon the Laſt Particular, is in many reſpects applicable to the following, That of *Abſtinence*, or *Faſting*; Another help to, and inſtrument of Repentance: and only ſo far of any Conſideration with God and wiſe Men, as it contributes to ſpiritual and holy Purpoſes.

Now by this is not meant, merely a Change in the kind of our Meats, or in the uſual time of taking them, not a quitting groſs, for delicious, though leſs nouriſhing, which is but a more refined Luxury. But it is a denying our ſelves in the Quantity and Quality of our Refreſhments, departing from the uſual Comforts, and Hours of receiving them, in ſuch manner, as may be a real puniſhment and humiliation to the Body, and its Appetites; and anſwer to the true import of thoſe Phraſes in Scripture; which call it an *afflicting*, an *humbling*, a *chaſtening of the Soul*, join it with *Sackcloth*, and *Aſhes*, and *Earth on the Head*, and every the moſt ſignificant Teſtimony of bitterneſs and dejection of Spirit.

Iſa. lviii. 5.
Pſal. xxxv. 13.
lxix. 10.
Nehem. ix. 1.
Dan. ix. 3.
Acts xiii. 2.
Matt. iv.
John iii.

The Practiſe of this Duty comes recommended to us by the Examples of Prophets, and Apoſtles, and our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf; of *Jews*, and Chriſtians, nay, of the very Heathens; So great an appearance there is of this being a branch even of Natural Religion. The greater reaſon have we to enquire what are the Reaſons and the Uſes of it; The principal whereof it ſhall ſuffice to touch upon in the following Particulars.

1. It is a very Natural Expreſſion of Sorrow. Nothing is more common, than for Perſons in Grief to neglect themſelves, to find no reliſh in, and loſe all Appetite to, the uſual Refreſhments and Comforts of Life. Hence this kind of Humiliation hath always been thought proper for Times and Circumſtances of Melan-

Melancholy and Diſtreſs. And therefore, if the laſt Ingredient of Repentance be in us to any becoming degree, this will be ſo far from needing a freſh Injunction, that it will almoſt neceſſarily attend, and prevent our Choice by following it of courſe.

2. It is no doubt a very fit Exerciſe of Revenge, and Holy Indignation againſt our ſelves, when, by voluntary deprivations of our uſual Suſtenance, we acknowledge our ſelves unworthy, not only of thoſe ſpiritual Mercies and ſpecial Favours, peculiar to God's faithful and elect; but even of that *daily Bread*, and thoſe ordinary Bleſſings, which he vouchſafes to diſtribute ſo liberally to all Mankind in common.

3. It is of conſiderable advantage by aſſiſting us againſt our Luſts, and bringing the Senſual under the Government of the Rational part of our Mind. It hath been obſerved heretofore, that our Bodies are the Inſtruments, and the Gratification of their Appetites the End, of all the Sins we commit; And that theſe act in conſtant oppoſition to the Dictates of ſober Reaſon and Religion. Upon which account our ſafety from Temptations in a great meaſure depends upon bringing theſe under, and keeping them in Subjection. But now the Caſe of Good and Evil Habits is thus far the ſame, that Both are acquired and ſtrengthend by renewed Acts of their own kind, Both broken and loſt by frequent acts of a contrary kind. As therefore Pleaſure inſlaves us by often indulging, ſo there is no way to break and free our ſelves from thoſe Chains, but often denying it. And altho' abſtaining now and then from a Meal may ſeem, and indeed is, no great matter in it ſelf; yet is it very great in its Conſequences. For Cuſtom in all Caſes hath more force than Men are generally aware: and by maſtering our deſires in leſs Inſtances, we eſtabliſh our Dominion, and inſenſibly get ground upon them, in greater

Vol. ii. p. 17. *Epiſt. for* Septuages.

greater and more difficult Tryals. And in no one Inſtance more than this, which does not only try us in a very ſenſible part, but draws away that fewel to our Vices, that Eaſe, and Luxury, and fulneſs of bread, miniſter. Thus at once ſtrengthning our Selves and weakening our Enemy: vanquiſhing and killing our hurtful, our carnal and worldly Affections, and diſpoſing our Mind, more freely, more chearfully, to thoſe that are pure, and heavenly, and for our true Happineſs. In which view 'tis, that we are taught in the Collect for *next Sunday*, to pray for *Grace to uſe ſuch Abſtinence, that our Fleſh being ſubdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey our Lord's Godly Motions, in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.*

4. Once more. Faſting is a very ſuitable Companion of, and mighty Help to Prayer. It carries off the dregs of undigeſted Fumes, lightens the weight of that Clog, which the Body is to the Soul, and generally renders us active, and nimble, and vigorous in our flights Heavenward. Hence we ſo often find theſe two joined in Scripture, Hence it was made a part of Devotion, upon all extraordinary occaſions, and a preparation for all important undertakings, where the bleſſing of God was to be implored, his Honour more eſpecially to be advanced, and his People edified. *Moſes* at receiving the Law, *Elias* at his being admitted to a nearer approach to God, Nay, our Bleſſed Lord after his Baptiſm vouchſafed to enter upon his Prophetick Office, with a Faſt of forty Days. And whatever may be ſaid of the reſt, our Lord muſt probably have condeſcended to it, for its agreeableneſs to a State of ſolemn Devotion. He had no Failings to lament, no Sins to chaſtiſe himſelf for, no corrupt or rebellious Luſts to ſubdue; but, tho' in theſe Reſpects he could not, yet did he not diſdain, in the quality of a Supplicant to his Father, to Faſt, as our Pattern.

1 Sam. viii. 14.
2 Chron. xx.
Act. xiii. 2. &c.

Can

Can any Man now, after all this, retain a doubt, whether Faſting be ſtill a Duty? Can we ſuppoſe our Lord would here direct the manner of doing that, which is not neceſſary to be done at all? The mention of which Direction puts me in Mind to obſerve, that the Scripture takes notice of Private, and of Publick Faſts. The One of our own, the Other of our Governour's appointment. Thoſe Humiliations for Perſonal, Theſe for National Calamities and Guilt. Of the Publick the Prophet *Joel* ſpeaks in the *Epiſtle*; Of the Private our Saviour, in the *Goſpel*, for this Day. Hence is the ſeeming Difference reconciled, between the Solemnity and Pomp required by the Prophet, and the Secrecy enjoined by our Lord. In the Publick we are to be Spurs and Examples to Others, and therefore our Zeal here, if ſincere, will be ſolemn. For the Private, matters are here tranſacted between God and our own Conſciences. And, when our whole concern ſhould be to recommend our ſelves to Him, from whom nothing can be concealed; to affect Pomp and Solemnity then, is to confeſs we have ſome indirect Views, and proclaims our Zeal to be tricking and unſincere. In a Word, By the Publick we are preſcrib'd to, ſo that the teſtifying our Obedience by viſible Acts there, is no more than our Duty: By the Private we preſcribe to our ſelves, and ſhould take heed here of gratifying that moſt dangerous of all Temptations, the Phariſaical Vanity, of voluntary Mortification, and uncommon Merit.

IV. The *Fourth* Qualification requiſite to Repentance is *Prayer*. Concerning which, intending to treat more at large very ſhortly, I at preſent only ſay, that 'tis fit This be an Application to the Divine Majeſty, attended with all that Humility, which a due Senſe of our own Vileneſs and Unworthineſs can inſpire; With all that Reverence, which the awful

Goſpel for ſecond Sunday in Lent.

Remem-

Remembrance of ſo Holy, and Juſt, and Great a God can beget; With all the Earneſtneſs, which our own Wants, and the Importance of the Bleſſings we ask, require; With all the humble Confidence, which Faith in the Son of God's Love, content to be made a Sacrifice of expiation for the Sins we confeſs, and implore the Pardon of, is a reaſonable Encouragement to. With Hearts thus diſpoſed, we may *come boldly to the throne of Grace*, rehearſe the black Catalogue of our Faults and Follies, acknowledge all our Wretchedneſs, ſhew our Lord all our Trouble, implore the Comforts of his Forgiving, and the Supplies of his aſſiſting Grace, to heal our Spiritual Sickneſs, to invigorate and confirm all our good Purpoſes and Reſolutions, to take away our Heart of Stone, and to put into us an Heart of Fleſh, to infuſe new Thoughts, and Deſires, and Affections, and to inable us ſo to perſevere in this Change of Life, that our growth in Goodneſs here may be hereafter conſummated in Glory. Theſe are the Petitions proper for Penitents, who have reaſon to be very importunate for thoſe Helps, without which they can do nothing; and for that Mercy and Remiſſion, without which it were happy for them, if they could ceaſe to be, and fall back to nothing.

V. A *Fifth* thing requiſite on theſe Occaſions is, *Almſ-giving*. By this we ſhew our Love to our God and Saviour, who hath declared the Poor his Receivers, and that our kind Offices, and liberal Contributions to Their Relief, ſhall all be placed to account, as done to Himſelf. By this we wean our Affections from the World, and learn to maſter thoſe Enjoyments of it, which, if not got above, prove the moſt fatal Snares to us. By this we perform that, which is the very Life and Soul of a Sinner's Converſion, deſpiſe the Creature, and devote our ſelves to God. This is the thing, which

Matt. xxv. 40.

God

God rejects the moſt ſolemn Humiliation of the *Jews*, for being defective in. This is the Teſtimony, our Lord requires of Men's Sincerity in Faſting; and for that purpoſe 'tis thus connected with it, in the Goſpel now before us; This the Proof where Men have their Hearts, according as the diſcharge, or neglect of it, diſcover the place, in which they lay up their Treaſure: This, laſtly, the Deſign of our wiſe and excellent Church, in reading ſo many Lectures of Charity, on the Preparatory Sundays, and this Day, to inſtruct us, that, without this Virtne, the Seaſon they introduce, and the ſtricteſt Auſterities and Devotions of it, are frivolous and vain. Iſa. lviii.

VI. The Only Particular now remaining to be ſpoken to is, that every one of thoſe already mentioned, be free from Oſtentation and Vain-glory. The reaſon of this Condition depends upon a Maxim, often intimated before, which is, That, as the Sinner's Corruption is all reſolved at laſt into loving the Creature more than God; ſo the Converſion of a Sinner, called upon this account the *Turning of his Heart*, conſiſts in being brought to ſuch a Change, as makes him love God above any, above all the Creatures. Now to contrive for pomp and ſhew; thoſe Acts of Piety and Worſhip, which, by the Nature of them, immediately refer to, and ought to terminate in God; ſhews, that there is ſtill a Partner (and every Partner is in this caſe Riaval) in our Affections. This taints all the Goodneſs of the ſeemingly beſt Actions, and yet is a Temptation, threatning the greater danger, becauſe none but good Actions can miniſter occaſion to it. Thus are we liable to be undone, not only by our Faults and Frailties; but, if they be not nicely guarded, and wiſely manag'd, even by our Virtues. Theſe naturally draw the obſervation firſt, and then the Praiſe of Men. And, if we are content to let theſe come of their own

accord, we may take very innocent Satisfaction in them. But the misfortune is, that what we like and love, we are apt to court out of time, and covet out of measure. This is a Frailty, rooted in our Nature, and for that reason, I take it, our Blessed Lord does choose to expose the folly of Vain-glory, by shewing, that the Men of this Principle destroy their own Pretensions, and that the very Point they drive at, would be more effectually carried the contrary way. You desire this rigour and severe Piety may be publickly known, and, therefore you unseasonably proclaim it your self: The best that can come of this is, but to let a very few about you into the knowledge of it. But keep this to your self, and be content to stay a little longer, and then it shall be published to, and applauded by, a whole World. Thus would Concealment now answer your end much better than Ostentation. But that's not all. From whom do you conceal it? You cannot from Him, who is chiefly concerned to know it. It is from such only, as have no part in, nor power to reward you for it. Thus for the sake of Them, who cannot, you discharge him, who could, and otherwise would, but is not now oblig'd to, recompence these good Deeds, which so plainly appear not to have been done for His sake. So the Reward you might have had is lost, and the consideration you proposed to your self in lieu of it, is incomparably less than you would have had in the same kind, added to that Reward. This is the substance of our Saviour's Argument, a necessary caution to us all, at any time, at this time more particularly.

The Pious severities whereof *the God of all Mercy* grant us Grace to attend upon, with a *Sincerity* so unblameable, A *Sorrow* so *godly*, An *Abstinence* so mortifying, A *Devotion* so fervent, A *Charity* so bountiful, and A *Zeal* so *unaffected*; that, having

thus

thus attained to *new and contrite Hearts, we may worthily lament our Sins, acknowledge our wretchedneſs, and receive of Him perfect Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs,* through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.* Collect.

The First Sunday in Lent.

The COLLECT.

O Lord, who for our ſake didſt faſt forty days and forty nights: Give us Grace to uſe ſuch Abſtinence, that our Fleſh being ſubdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey thy godly Motions in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, to thy Honour and Glory, who liveſt and reigneſt with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, one God, World without end. *Amen.*

Matth. iv. 2. 1 *Cor.* x. 27. *Gal.* v. 17, 24.

The EPISTLE.

2 Cor. vi. 1.

WE then, as workers together with him, beſeech you alſo, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

1. Since therefore God hath vouchſafed to admit us, the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Goſpel, into a part of this great Work, (reconciling Mankind to Him by Chriſt. See *Chap.* v. 19, 20.) We, in diſcharge of that weighty Truſt, moſt earneſtly intreat you to make a right Uſe and Profit of this Favour of God toward you.

2. *For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of Salvation have I ſuccoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of ſalvation.*

2. By that Paſſage in *Iſaiah*, (*Chap.* xlix. 8.) you may perceive that God hath particular Times of ſaving and helping. This, when the Goſpel is imparted to you, is your Time, which ye are concerned not to let ſlip.

3. *Giving no offence in any thing, that the miniſtry be not blamed.*

3. To this we contribute, not by our Doctrine only, but Example too, demeaning our ſelves ſo, as to give no juſt Prejudice againſt our Perſons, or our Function.

4. *But in all things approving our ſelves as the miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes:*

5. *In ſtripes, in impriſonments, in tumults, in watchings, in faſtings,*

4. 5. But anſwering our Character, both by what we do, and by what we ſuffer in the Exerciſe of it.

6. By Chaſtity, by Knowledge of the Myſteries of God (or, as ſome, by prudent Carriage) by bearing with thoſe that do amiſs, by gentle and engaging and courteous Behaviour to all, by the miraculous Gifts and Operations of the Holy Spirit.

6. *By pureneſs, by knowledge, by long-ſuffering, by kindneſs, by the Holy Ghoſt, by love unfeigned,*

7. By preaching the Goſpel pure and uncorrupted; By the Succeſs and Efficacy given by God to that Preaching; By arming our ſelves againſt all the Temptations both of Proſperity and Adverſity.

7. *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left.*

8. Not moved from our Duty by the different Treatment we meet with; not exalted when they ſpeak ill of us.

8. *By honour and diſhonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true,*

Some call us Impoſtors, but we are true Men;

9. Some deſpiſe us as obſcure, others know and value us;

9. *As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chaſtened, and not killed;*

We ſeem at the point of Death every day, but ſtill God preſerves us. Our Perſecutions exerciſe, but they do not deſtroy us.

10. Our Circumſtances are thought very bad, and yet the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and the ſpiritual Comforts we feel, give us perpetual Joy: We are reckoned poor, and yet we communicate to Multitudes that are in want of the true Riches; and, while we ſeem to have nothing, (by the Contentedneſs of our Mind, and the Favour, and Promiſes of God, which we know are ſure to us) we ſtand poſſeſt of all that is good and deſirable.

10. *As ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.*

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

ST. *Paul* had, in the Close of the *Fifth* Chapter, magnified the Mercy of God by Jesus Christ; in appointing Him, as a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind: In thus reconciling to himself those Offenders and Rebels, who, but for this Condescension, must have perished everlastingly, in and for that Enmity they had sinn'd themselves into; And in sending the Ministers of his Gospel, as so many Embassadors, commissioned in his Name to offer them Terms, to treat with, to importune them, that they would come in, and accept Friendship with their injured Lord, and Happiness to their otherwise inevitably ruined Selves. Ver. 19,20,21.

At the beginning of this *Sixth* Chapter, (the Epistle for the Day,) he gives an account, after what manner He and his Fellow-Labourers behaved themselves in the Execution of this so important, so honourable Office; And, in Their Character, hath left every Minister of Christ a Model, on which to frame his Own: Hath admonished Us, who have likewise the honour of being *Workers together with God*, how pressing and diligent we ought to be in Doctrine and Exhortation, how blameless and exemplary in our Lives. A proper Portion of Scripture, at the approach of our Ember-Fast, and worthy the most attentive Consideration of All, who have been already, or are now about to be, or shall at any time hereafter be, sent forth upon the same Embassy.

But, reflecting, that the main Design of this Treatise is not to teach Them, who are called and qualified to teach Others; I content my self with this short Hint to my Brethren of the same Holy Function; and fix upon a Subject of larger Extent and Concern, contained in the *First* and *Second* Verses. In the *former*

whereof the Apoſtle gives his *Corinthians* a very earneſt Exhortation; In the *latter*, a Reaſon enforcing it. Theſe Two Particulars, and the Application of them, ſhall make the Matter of my preſent Diſcourſe.

I. The Subſtance of the Exhortation is, That *they would* not *receive the Grace of God in vain.*

Gen. xxxii. 15.
—— xlvii. 25.
Eſther ii. 17.
Rom. v. 11.
—— xi. 6.
Heb. ii. 9.

1. Grace, in the general Notion of it, denotes Favour and Kindneſs, ſuch as does not only argue a Diſpoſition to do the Perſon good, on whom it is beſtowed, but ſuch as is beſtowed freely, and without any Obligation; and in this reſpect differs from Debt, or Reward, adequate, and ſtrictly ſo called. And, in this ſenſe, the Grace of God imports that Affection and Good-will which he bears to Men, and all thoſe Benefits proceeding thence, which he is either under no engagment to give, or which the engaging himſelf to give was of his own mere Motion, and a free Act of Mercy.

Acts xiii. 43.
—— xx. 24.
Tit. ii. 11.
1 Pet. v. 12.

2. The Grace of God, in a more reſtrained Senſe, is frequently ſet to ſignify the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt; ſo ſtiled, becauſe the Terms and Privileges of that Salvation tendred by it are the effect of his infinite and undeſerved Goodneſs; The Knowledge and Publication of it imparted to whom, at what time, and in what meaſure he pleaſes; And the Bleſſings and Rewards of it, when ſo imparted, (though to ſuch indeed covenanted Mercies, if they perform Their part,) yet ſtill ſo vaſtly diſproportionate in value to their beſt Services, as to deſerve the Name not of *Wages*, but of a *Gift*.

Rom. vi. 24.

Again, 3. The Grace of God does ſometimes ſignify a certain inward Working of his Spirit, in, and with the Minds of Men; which, by ſuggeſting, and diſpoſing them to comply with, reaſonable

sonable Arguments, and good Motions, renders the outward Ministry of the Word, and other Means instituted for our Salvation, perswasive and successful. This is represented, as the Principle of Goodness and Spiritual Life; By this the Saints *are what they are*; This *quickens those that were once dead in trespasses and Sins*; By this God *works in us that which is acceptable in his sight, even to will and to do of his good pleasure*; And by *growing in* this we persevere in well-doing, and are kept from *falling from our own stedfastness*. Thus our being, and living, and moving, in a Spiritual Sense and Capacity, our beginning, our proceeding, our finishing as we ought, all are owing to that Grace and Spirit of God in our Souls; Which, with regard to its Powers and Operations there, answers to that enlivening and invigorating Principle, that animates our Bodies. From whence it is easy to discern the Necessity of this Grace, and that the largest Measures of the Thing, in either of the Two Senses foregoing, cannot suffice for our Salvation, but must wait for this *Third* to complete and crown them with Success.

1 Cor. xv. 10. Eph. ii. 5. Hebr. xiii. 2 Phil. ii. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18.

By thus explaining, how the Grace of God may be understood, it is easily discerned, how that Grace is *received in vain*, according to all these Acceptations of it.

1. Take it for *Favour* and *Kindness* in general, and thus it *is received in vain*, when we do not entertain our Blessings with Thankfulness, nor use them with Prudence, nor improve them to those Purposes they were intended to serve. For the *Goodness of God*, in every sort and instance, *leadeth to Repentance*. In the Nature of the Thing, and the Design of the Giver, it is a powerful Motive to Amendment of Life. This being the only Method we are capable of expressing our Gratitude by,

Rom. ii. 4.

if not produced, defeats the Purpoſe of the Gift: And That is underſtood to be *in vain*, which diſappoints our reaſonable Expectations, and does not compaſs the End, it was done for.

2. Take this Grace then for the Goſpel of Chriſt, and thus it is *received in vain*, when the Perſons, to whom it is preached, do not live according to it. This, indeed, is that Grace of *God that bringeth Salvation*: But how? It follows there, *teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, &c. It is indeed the only Diſpenſation, whereby we can be ſaved. But neither can we be ſaved by It, without coming within the Conditions and Qualifications, on which it's glorious Promiſes are ſuſpended. To thoſe Hypocritical Profeſſors, who are Chriſtians in *Word and in Name, but not in Deed and in Truth*; who profane *Chriſt's name*, and proſtitute his Word, by not *departing from iniquity, it reveals the wrath of God from Heaven*: And declares the more *Stripes* due to that wicked Servant, *who knew his Maſters will*, and did it not, for that very reaſon, becauſe he knew it. And, if any thing may be truly ſaid to have been received in vain; ſure that muſt needs be ſo, for which the Condition of the Receiver is not only never the better, but a great deal worſe, than if he had not received it at all.

Tit. ii. 11, 12, &c.

2 Tim. ii. 19. Rom. i. 18. Luke xii. to 47, 48.

3. Once more. We *receive* the Grace of God, in the Laſt importance of the Word, *in vain*; When we do not attend to, and comply with, the Suggeſtions and good Motions, which, I have obſerved before, the Spirit of God works in our Minds. For if we would think and ſpeak rationally concerning this matter, God muſt be conceived to deal with us on theſe occaſions, in a manner agreeable to thoſe Faculties he

hath given us. Now the whole of our Duty consists in a right knowledge first, and then in the Choice, of Good, and refusal of Evil. Consequently, the assistances of Grace are necessary, both for the informing our Judgment, and for inclining our Will. With regard to the *Former*, God is said to teach us, *to open our Eyes*, to *enlighten our Understandings*, to *fill and enrich us with Knowledge*, and the like. With regard to the *Latter*, he is said to *renew in us a right Spirit*, to *incline our Hearts*, to *order our Steps*, to *turn away our Eyes from Vanity*, to *lead us into the way of Righteousness*, to *make us go in the paths of his Commandments*; and to do many other things of like Importance. But all this seems to be done, by suggesting such Ideas, as give us new light; and by propounding such Arguments, as perswade our better Choice, provided we attend to them, and will be determined, nay even in disposing, but not compelling us to attend to, and be determined by, their true Weight and Force. We are sure, 'tis done in such a way, as requires our own concurrence, to render it effectual. Hence God is said to *make men a new heart*, and they are *commanded to make it themselves*: He is said *to work in us to will and do of his good pleasure*, and that very working of His is used as an Inducement for us *to work out our own Salvation*. When we thus do our part, the End is answered. For St. *Paul* gives this as a Proof, that *the Grace of God was not bestowed upon him in vain, that he laboured more abundantly than all the* Apostles. And consequently, as oft as God affords us Spiritual Succours, and we neglect to improve them; when his Spirit leads, but we refuse to follow; then is it, that we do, in this signification also, *receive the Grace of God in vain.*

Psal. cxix. 33. 18.
Ephes. i. 17, 18.
1 Cor. i. 4, 5.
Psalm li. 11.
cxix. 35, 36, 37. 133. cxliii. 10.
Ezek. xi. 19. xviii. 31.
Philip. ii. 12, 13.
1 Cor. xv. 10.

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We ſee by this time the plain meaning of the Exhortation, and are thereby capable of judging when we comply with it: The Reaſon brought to perſwade ſuch compliance comes next to be conſidered. *For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted,* Verſe 2. *and in the day of Salvation have I ſuccoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of Salvation.*

The Words in *Iſaiah*, from whence they are cited, are ſpoken to Chriſt in the Perſon of God the Father; and accommodated here to his Members of the Church in *Corinth*. In which there is no manner of violence, becauſe the whole ſtreſs of the Application lies in thoſe two Words, *the time accepted*, and *the day of Salvation*. And the Argument drawn from hence is, that when the Grace of God is offered, we muſt be very diligent to lay hold of, and improve it; Becauſe God hath certain Seaſons and Periods, which we cannot promiſe our ſelves the return of them at Pleaſure: and therefore it concerns us to make the beſt of the preſent Opportunity, which we may know to be ſuch a ſeaſon, but cannot know whether it will be the laſt, God ever intends to afford us.

This Argument implies Two things. The Danger of ſlipping the preſent Opportunities of Grace and Salvation; and the Certainty of ſucceeding if we lay hold of them.

1. The Former of theſe is what we could not but be ſenſible of, did we but reflect at all, That this Life is the utmoſt Period of the Day of Grace; That the continuance of this Life is the moſt uncertain thing in the World; And that we cannot be ſure, God will extend to us the Opportunities of Grace, ſo long as Life does continue.

1. I need not, I hope, enlarge upon the *Firſt*; that this Life is the utmoſt Period of the Day of Grace; after St. *Paul* hath ſo expreſly ſaid, that the matter

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we are to be judged upon at the last Day, are *the things done in our Bodies*. And so our own Reason will tell us too; For look about through the whole Scheme of the Christian Religion, and you shall find no one Virtue or Vice, commanded or forbidden there, which is not proper to the present State, and supposes a Soul united to a Body, at the time of acting it: Faith, and Hope, and Trust in God, are recommended by an adherence to Objects unseen, and such as the Body keep us at a distance from. Love of God, Contempt of the World, Heavenly-Mindedness, Subduing our Appetites and Passions, suppose us present with the Creatures and the Passions we get above, which we can be in this Life only. Infidelity and Debauchery, Injuring our Neighbour, Dishonouring our selves by beastly Lusts, giving Scandal to others by a wicked Life, and the like, are things confined to our present State. No other is capable of them, where the Soul lives and rests separately. And, since after its Separation by Death, we are not to expect any return to the Body, till the last Trump shall raise that to Judgment; it follows, that this will be a Day not of Action but of Recompence; that the Recompence will proceed upon what was done before these two parted; and consequently, our Condition, we must enter then upon for all Eternity, must depend upon, and be agreeable to, the Condition they left each other in at their parting. They, who dye in the favour of God, shall receive their Bodies again, to enter upon Bliss and Glory: They who dyed out of it, have the Sentence of Misery already begun to be executed upon them, and can have no fresh Tryal, no future Opportunity, of bettering their Condition, either in, or after the Grave.

2. And is it not manifest, that we can none of us know, how soon this may be our own Condition? Do we not see careless Sinners daily snatched away in the

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vigour of their Age, not live out half their Days, which by the courſe of Nature they promiſed themſelves; and do not the number of ſuch far exceed the Inſtances of grey Hairs, and thoſe Funerals which come by gentle and leiſurely decays? Why ſhould we then fool our ſelves by fond and groundleſs Expectations of a Life, which the very next Moment may take from us? Why preſume upon a quiet and firm poſſeſſion of that, which we have no manner of Security for; of that which is often cut off without any warning; that hangs by a Thread ſo ſlender, ſo eaſily ſnapped in two, that no accident how ſlight ſoever has not ſufficient weight to break it: that laſtly, which when once broken, can never be pieced again? Surely did Men remember, (and is it not ſtrange they can forget) their own Mortality; they would not venture upon one Minutes delay, in a Matter of ſuch mighty Conſequence, when every Minute may be their laſt, and when the laſt Minute of their living is ſure to be the laſt of working out their Salvation.

3. But there is yet a greater danger behind, for we cannot be ſure, that our power of working will extend ſo far as the time for it. God often takes his Holy Spirit from Men, and ſuffers them to live only for *filling up the meaſure of their Iniquities.* This is a ſad effect of his Juſtice, that, after many Tryals to perſwade them, he ceaſes to ſtrive with thoſe who will not be perſwaded. Without his Grace they cannot repent and amend, and that Grace he in anger ſometimes withdraws, abandons them to the Tempter, leaves them under a Diſability, but ſuch, as is the effect of their Perverſeneſs. They would not uſe Grace to prevent their Sins, and therefore they are denyed the Grace to repent of them. They hated to be reformed, while they might, and now the very Power of being reformed is taken from them. This ſhews the ſad and comfortleſs Condition of ſuch Sin-

Sinners, but it ſhews withal the righteouſneſs of God in all that is brought upon them. For he hath no where obliged himſelf to contend always with thoſe, who reſiſt and defeat his kind Intentions of doing them good. Nay, he declares he will not. For thus *Solomon* introduces him, admoniſhing wicked People how he deſigns to deal with them. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof;* Prov. ii. 24, &c. *I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. Then ſhall They call upon Me, but I will not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me. For the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them, and the proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them.*

And what can awaken ſtupid Sinners, if this warning will not, that, beſides the danger of being cut ſhort in the midſt of their wild Career, they hazard the ſhortning their own Day of Grace: That, by ſetting their Hearts to act in deſpight of the Methods, made uſe of to reduce them, they may ſhut the Door ſo hard againſt themſelves, that their moſt importunate knocking afterwards ſhall not prevail for the opening it again? What, on the other hand, can juſtify the Equity of God's proceedings with vile, incorrigible Wretches, if this do not clear it from all Exception, that his Spirit is ever at hand, to guide and counſel, to aſſiſt and ſtrengthen all, who will accept of his Protection, hearken to his Voice, and be directed by him; That every one, who periſhes for want of Mercy, is his own Murtherer, and Loſt, becauſe he refuſed his own Mercy; that, in all Requeſts for Pardon, and the Divine Aids to do better, God never ſtops his Ears to our Cries, and refuſes to be Intreated, till we have firſt been obſtinately Deaf to his Checks and Calls, and reſolve not to be perſwaded? This is the plain Importance, not of that Paſſage

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of *Solomon* only, but of sundry others in Scripture, upon the like occasion, so that the Prophets complaint against *Israel*, is equally true of every hardned Sinner, who *receives the Grace of God in vain*,

Hos. xiii. 9. *Thou, even Thou hast destroyed thy self.*

2. In farther Confirmation of which Truth I urge, lastly, The Certainty of our succeeding, if we in earnest lay hold of the present Opportunities of Grace; A Certainty, implied by the Apostle in these words, *Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of Salvation.* Of this we cannot in reason ask any fuller Evidence, than the very Kindness of putting those Opportunities into our Hands. God owes them not to us, but is entirely Master of his own Favours; He hath no Motive to it, but Mercy and Love to most unworthy Creatures. And, that he should, by these Advantages, mean to mock those, who are forward to embrace, and earnestly desirous to improve by them, is somewhat too unsincere, too barbarous, for a Being perfectly Holy and True, Just and Good, to be imagined capable of. Accordingly we may observe, that, as oft as God threatens to cast off a People, as a leading step to that Misery, and an Omen what they are to expect, he threatens the removing their Candlestick, a Famine of the Word, and a fatal withdrawing those means of Grace, which had been so long offered to no purpose and effect, except that of Abuse and Scorn. Somewhat like this indeed seems to be done, with private Persons, when, to compleat their Wickedness and Misery, he suffers them at last to fall under that saddest of all Temptations, turning their Backs upon his Sacraments, forsaking his Church, casting his Word behind them, and treating things that are Sacred with Contempt. How should such Mens Disease be other than desperate, who thus despise and declare against their Remedy? But till it come to this, there are certainly Hopes; And, while we

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are content to uſe, and put our ſelves in the way of Means, though theſe have long been try'd with poor Succeſs; yet it is a Sign, that as We have not given theſe, ſo neither hath God yet given Us, abſolutely over. Not yet, I ſay; But there is danger and great cauſe to fear he will, and our continuing to uſe them without Fruit, is a provocation to it. Let me then, with the Apoſtle here, beſeech you, that you look to it in time; that you do not loſe this precious Gift by receiving it in vain; that you apply your ſelves to your Buſineſs, while there is yet an Eleventh Hour left; That you make good Profit of this Holy Seaſon in particular; looking upon it as a Pledge of the Divine Love, and a loud repeated Call, to conſider, and *know, in this your day, the things that belong* to your eternal *Peace, before they be hidden from* your *Eyes*: Let us from this inſtant, humble our Souls before the ſight of our offended God, ſubdue our corrupt Affections by all proper Severities and Voluntary Reſtraints; remembering the Conſequences of every freſh Opportunity to become better, the juſt Condemnation of Grace received in vain; and eſpecially pray moſt earneſtly, as our Beſt of Churches directs, that *from hardneſs of heart, and contempt of his word and comman* *our Good Lord will deliver us.* Amen.

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The First Sunday in Lent.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE. St. Matth. iv. 1.

1. Jesus, presently after his Baptism, by an impulse of the Holy Ghost of which he was full (See *Luke iv.* 1.) went up from *Jordan* into the Wilderness, where he was alone with the wild Beasts, (See *Mark i.* 13.) that there he might be tempted of the Devil.

1. *THen was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.*

2. There he, by a miraculous Power, did neither eat nor drink forty Days and Nights; but then he felt the Necessities and Appetites of his Humane Nature return upon him.

2. *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred.*

3. Of these the Devil taking an Advantage, challenged him to prove himself the Son of God by turning Stones into Bread.

3. *And when the Tempter came unto him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

4. Jesus answered, that there was no occasion for such a Miracle to satisfie his Hunger, since the Scripture hath declared (*Deut. viii.* 3.) that God hath other ways of sustaining his Servants, besides that of common Food.

4. *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

5. Then the Devil conveys him to *Jerusalem*, sets him on the Battlement of the Temple there,

5. *Then the Devil taketh him up into the holy City, and setteth him on a pinnicle of the Temple;*

6. And would have perswaded him to prove himself the Son of God, by throwing himself down, urging a Passage of Scripture, (*Psalm xci.* 2.) which promised him Protection and Safety.

6. *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

7. To this Jesus returned another Scripture (*Deut. vi.* 16.) forbidding Men to tempt God by unnecessary Experiments of his Power and Care of them. As this would be, by arguing a distrust of the Evidences already given of the Point he urged him to prove, by complying with that Proposal.

7. *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt thy Lord thy God.*

8. Again

8. *Again the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.*

9. *And ſaith unto him, all theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.*

8. Once more, the Devil moves him to an exceeding high Mountain, repreſents all the Splendor and Glory of the World to him, and proffers all that as a Reward, if he would fall down and worſhip him. Pretending that he was in poſſeſſion of, and had it all at his diſpoſal.

10. *Then ſaith Jeſus unto unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.*

10. This offer Jeſus rejected with Indignation, commanded the Devil away, and proved from another Scripture, (*Deut. vi.* 13.) that Worſhip was due to God alone.

11. *Then the Devil leaveth him, and behold Angels came and miniſtred unto him.*

11. Then the Devil, baffled in all his Attempts, left him for that time, (ſee *Luke iv.* 13.) and the Holy Angels came, attended upon him, and ſupplied him with Neceſſaries.

COMMENT.

IT is not without excellent good reaſon, that, among many other Arguments to quicken us into the Duties of this Holy Time, (the Abſtinence and Severities whereof are one continued Fight againſt Temptations) the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour ſhould this Day be propounded to our Conſideration.

The ſeveral Circumſtances of this Encounter with the Prince of Darkneſs are full of Inſtruction and Encouragement: The Ends for which, The Time when, The Place where, The Manner how he was tempted; The Method taken for repelling thoſe Attempts upon his Virtue; and The Comforts that followed thereupon: All conſpire to teach us the Nature of, to put us upon our guard againſt, to animate and ſupport us under, thoſe Tryals, which daily, hourly exerciſe us; and muſt needs therefore be of mighty Conſequence, for every Man to reflect upon, and attain to a right underſtanding of them.

I begin with the Ends, for which our Bleſſed Lord ſuffered himſelf to be Tempted, and of Them theſe Three that follow ſeem chiefly to deſerve our notice.

Firſt, One great Deſign of our Lord's Temptation ſeems to have been, The Encouragement of all good Chriſtians, under the like Circumſtances. This is the Account given of it by St. *Paul*, *In that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* This is the Captain of our Salvation, who came to fight our Battels, and fit it was, that He ſhould firſt engage, and try the utmoſt Strength of the Enemy of Souls. But as he fought, ſo did he conquer likewiſe, not for himſelf, but for thoſe whoſe Duty it is to fight under him. And what can be more effectual to animate ſuch in all their Spiritual Encounters, than the Contemplation of their Victorious Leader? So ſenſible a Proof, that their Adverſary, fierce and ſubtile, great and powerful, though he be, is not invincible; that a Man, of like natural Paſſions and Infirmities with themſelves hath vanquiſhed him to their hand, and that they march againſt a Foe, already routed ſhamefully, and forced to quit the Field.

Heb. xi. 18.

I am ſenſible, it may be objected againſt this Argument, That our Saviour's Caſe and Ours are far from being the ſame: That He indeed had the true Humane Nature, and all thoſe Frailties, which are the neceſſary Appendages and Incumbrances of it; But then, that Humane was inſeperably united to his own Divine Nature. This muſt render it Impregnable, and by the ſame reaſon render the Conqueſts gained by a Perſon, who was God as well as Man, very unfit to be drawn into Conſequence, by Them, who are but Men, weak and ſinful Men: not guarded by that Armour, which in Him was impenetrable.

To this it may be anſwered, That, although our Lord's Divinity did indeed ſet him far above the utmoſt Oppoſition of any created Power; yet did not that Divinity exert it ſelf upon all Occaſions; but ſuſpended its Operations, and was withdrawn, as God ſaw fit. That thus it ceaſed to act at the time of our Lord's Paſſion, ſeems very evident, not only from the Hiſtory of his Sufferings and Death, but even from his own Words, when telling them, that came to apprehend him in the Garden; *When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye ſtretched forth no hands againſt me, but this is your Hour, and the power of darkneſs.* Luke xxii. 53. And, as theſe Checks, and voluntary Suſpenſions of this Divine Glory and Strength, were thought expedient, after numberleſs and undeniable manifeſtations of them to the World. So is there no appearance of thoſe Perfections manifeſting themſelves at all, till he entred upon the publick Exerciſe of his Prophetick Office. This hath been generally thought the Caſe of our Lord's Temptation in particular. In which his Divine Perfections lying by, as it were, and forbearing to engage, He is to be conſidered abſtractedly, as a Man, though much more perfect than any other Man. And then the Inference ariſing from hence is properly this: That though his being God and Man both made it impoſſible for him to Sin, when he was tempted; Yet, in regard he was attack'd as Man only, this Example ſhews, that it is poſſible for Us not to ſin, when We are tempted.

But then the Conſideration of his Divine Nature is a mighty Support under our Difficulties, becauſe aſſuring us of his Ability to relieve us, by ſupplying our Weakneſſes and our Wants, by pouring in thoſe Recruits of Grace and Supernatural Strength from above, which none but God can give, and without which we are not in a Condition to ſtand our Ground,

or make Head againſt the very ſlighteſt Aſſaults of that Foe, which labours our Deſtruction. And thus the Contemplation of our Bleſſed Lord is doubly uſeful to us. For, as Man, his Example proves a Victory over Temptation poſſible to be attained; and, as God, his Almighty Power is our Security, for thoſe Spiritual Aſſiſtances, upon the ſeaſonable Acceſſions whereof that Poſſibility, in the preſent ſtate of things, does entirely depend.

Secondly, Another excellent Deſign, for which our Saviour was tempted, is, hereby to convince us of his Compaſſion and Readineſs to help us. This alſo is the Apoſtle's Inference, *We have not an high-prieſt, that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as We are, yet without ſin.* By partaking of our Nature, he hath alſo taken part in all the innocent Affections of it. Among which, This is One, to be moved with more than ordinary Tenderneſs, and apply our ſelves with greater Zeal to ſuccour our Brethren, where Their Calamities are the ſame, or very near to thoſe, which We have in our own Perſons formerly felt the weight of. This preſently awakens the Remembrances of our paſt Sorrows, makes us feel them afreſh, in Theirs, and endeavour their Relief with a degree of Compaſſion, which They who never had any Experience, how needful and how welcome it was in the like Circumſtances, ſeldom are ſenſible, ſcarce indeed capable of. Now it is Our unſpeakable Advantage, not only, that our Lord is therefore of the ſame Conſtitution and Diſpoſition, by virtue of his Humane Nature; but that the utmoſt we do or can endure, cannot exceed, cannot come up to, the Hardſhips He condeſcended to ſuffer in that Nature. So that, as the Former Particular proved his Ability, This proves his Diſpoſition and Forwardneſs to help us. And upon this it is, that the Apoſtle

Heb iv. 15.

ſtle grounds that Confidence, with which he ought to be addreſſed to in all our Straits and Exigencies. For ſo it follows there: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.* Heb. iv. 16.

Thirdly. Another very uſeful Deſign, ſerved by our Lord's being tempted, is that of Inſtructing us, that not any, even the beſt and moſt exalted degree of Virtue, ſets Men above Temptation. 'Tis true, what Jeſus ſuffered of this kind was an Inſtance of Choice and voluntary Condeſcenſion; but ſo was his taking that Humane Nature, which alone could render him capable of ſuffering it. With Us the Matter is far otherwiſe. As we were altogether Paſſive in receiving this Nature, ſo muſt we be content with the Difficulties, to which the Condition of it expoſes us of courſe. And ſuch, to be ſure, are Temptations, (as will appear more fully by and by) and with Theſe too we have reaſon to be very well contented, becauſe, though they be Occaſions of Vice, yet are they alſo Exerciſes of Virtue; and, as they may become inſtrumental to our Puniſhment and Miſery, ſo may they, to our Happineſs and Reward. Hence that of Saint *James, My brethren count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations*; And therefore juſt Matter of Joy, becauſe, as he goes on, theſe are Tryals of our Faith, and ſuch repeated Tryals contribute to our Perfection. When we find the Chriſtian's Life ſo often compared to a Warfare, we have fair warning what we muſt expect. Frequent Action, and continual Danger, are the Lot of Soldiers; Experience of theſe is ſo neceſſary to their excelling in this Art, that all the Diſcipline in the World will not ſuffice to make Them Maſters of it, who never were engaged. Valour is confirmed, and Preſence of Mind acquired, by thoſe things, which James i. 2.

Nature uſes to dread, becoming familiar. So that, could theſe ſpiritual Soldiers never be brought into the Field, it were to their diſadvantage. This would ſtill keep them raw, defeat the End of liſting them under Chriſt's Banner: And, for Thoſe among them, who have already learnt their Trade, and eminently diſtinguiſhed themſelves heretofore, to be excuſed from Action; would be an Injury and a Blemiſh upon them, hinder their Promotion, and rob their Prince of the Glory their Gallantry would bring to him. By this ſcriptural Alluſion ſo purſued, 'tis eaſy to diſcern, that no Man muſt, that Good Men leaſt of any ſhould, flatter themſelves with freedom from Temptations; Which in effect is every whit as abſurd, as to look for profound Peace in the Field of Battle. Since our whole Life is unavoidably, profeſſedly, a State of War; and Temptations are the Stratagems of that Enemy of Souls, who is perpetually labouring to overcome us.

II. This may receive ſome farther Illuſtration by the *Second* thing I mentioned, as obſervable here, The *Time of our Lord's Temptation*. Which, if we look back to the Concluſion of the Third Chapter, and attend to the Continuation of the Hiſtory, expreſſed by the word *Then*, at the beginning of This Chapter, will evidently appear, to have followed cloſe upon his Baptiſm, and the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, immediately conſequent to it.

Now the Uſe, we ſhall do well to make of This, is, I conceive, To form a right Judgment concerning the Sacraments of the Chriſtian Religion, and the Advantages to be expected from them. A thing the more neceſſary, becauſe many good People are plainly miſtaken in thoſe Expectations; And, looking to receive ſomething, which He, who inſtituted them, never intended to give, are apt to be diſquieted with groundleſs Scruples, and highly diſcontented with

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themſelves, and their honeſt Endeavours. Nothing is more common, than to find Men complaining, nay, even wondring, that they are followed by Temptations, when preparing for, actually engaged about, or lately come from, the diſcharge of Holy Duties: Concluding from thence, that they have not pray'd as they ought, that they are unworthy Receivers, and that God does not accept their Services, or elſe ſurely it would be otherwiſe with them, and they ſhould be more at eaſe, from wandring Thoughts, and wicked Suggeſtions.

Now, I hope, it may do ſomewhat toward ſatiſfying ſuch Perſons, to recollect, that our Bleſſed Maſter was baptized, not becauſe he wanted, but becauſe he meant to honour and recommend, that ſanctifying Ordinance; That He was filled with the Holy Ghoſt; That he was, by a Voice from Heaven, expreſly declared the *Bleſſed Son of God*, *in whom he is well pleaſed*; And yet the very next thing we hear him is, that then he was tempted, nay, that *the Spirit led him up into the Wilderneſs*, to the intent he might be *tempted of the Devil*. Conſequently, we are not to look, that Sacraments, or any Other Holy Duties, ſhould procure us an abſolute Freedom from Temptations. Conſequently, Our being tempted in, or after, the Performance of ſuch Duties is no reaſonable Cauſe to conclude, that we were not accepted of God, or that he hath withdrawn his Holy Spirit from Us, or that they have not had their proper Efficacy.

Matth. iii. 14.
Luke iv. 1.
Matth. iii. 17.
Verſe 1.

For, as theſe Conſequences are plainly contrary to the Example of our Bleſſed Saviour; ſo are they, to the Reaſon and Nature of the Thing. The Sacraments, and other Offices of Piety and Devotion, are Weapons of our ſpiritual Warfare. They fit and prepare us for more vigorous Action; They are

Means of conveying to us ſuch Strength, as may enable us to *withſtand in the day of Tryal*, They repair our Breaches, and heal our Wounds: But they are ſo many Acts of Hoſtility, ſo many Attempts to reſcue our ſelves out of the Snare of the Enemy; and therefore ſo many freſh Provocations, which he will not fail to take all poſſible Advantage of, for reducing us again. And, Can we wonder, that He ſhould double His Diligence in proportion to Ours; and then labour to get back his Prey, when he is in moſt viſible Danger of loſing it? If wicked Men feel not the ſame Conflicts, it is, becauſe they would be needleſsly repeated upon thoſe, whom he hath faſt already, and who take no pains to make their Eſcape. But there is great reaſon, why he ſhould not ſuffer good Men to enjoy the like Peace and Quiet; who are continually ſtruggling with, and getting ground of him. And therefore, as we may rationally expect the Service hotteſt, when we are moſt careful to diſcharge our Duty; So the finding it ſuch ought rather to be interpreted a Good than a Bad Sign: a Matter of Satisfaction, and not of Diſcomfort. And the Advice of the wiſe Man ſhould be ſettled in all our Hearts. *My Son, if thou come to ſerve the Lord, prepare thy ſelf for Temptation, ſet thy Heart aright, and conſtantly endure: and make not haſte* (be not impatient) *in time of trouble. Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayeſt be increaſed at thy laſt end.* Ecclus. ii. 1, 2, 3.

III. I paſs now to my *Third* Head, *The Place* where our Lord was tempted: *The Wilderneſs.* The Scriptures preſent us with ſome Other Inſtances of Holy Men, who, upon making nearer Approaches to God, were ordered ſome place very remote from the Converſation of Men, as moſt proper for that purpoſe, and added Faſting to that Solitude. Thus did *Moſes* twice, at his receiving the Tables of the Law;

Thus did *Elias*; And, that the Jews might have no Pretence to think His Authority, on this account, inferior to either of Theirs, thus, you ſee here, did our Saviour Chriſt. The Uſefulneſs of Retirement, when we would ſet our ſelves apart to the Buſineſs of Religion, is confirmed by every Man's Experience, who makes the Tryal. By withdrawing from the World, we ſhut out infinite Diſtractions, are better qualified to collect our Thoughts, and fix them upon God, and another State.

But ſtill the ſame Inference meets us again, which was ſpoken to under the Laſt Head; That even here we ought not to flatter our ſelves with an Imagination of abſolute Safety. In ſuch Circumſtances the Tempter aſſaulted our Bleſſed Maſter; In ſuch we ſhall often find him attacking us. Our Cloſets, and our Faſting-Days, do indeed ſeparate us from the Snares of Buſineſs and Company: and let us into a nearer Communication with Him, whom our Soul loveth. They help to raiſe our Devotion, and to keep up our Virtue: The Former would quickly languiſh, and the Latter remit of its Vigour, if Theſe were unfrequented. But yet we find our ſelves cloſe purſued even hither; The Zeal, we labour at, or kindle by theſe Retirements, is cooled by wandring Thoughts in the very Act of Prayer; and the Activity we deſign, rebated by many Interruptions. One plain Account whereof is certainly this, That our Enemy makes his Approaches toward Us, with leſs Formality, and therefore with more Succeſs, than He did, or could do againſt the Holy *Jeſus*. Him he ſeems to have encountred in ſome viſible Shape, the Purity and Innocence of the Perſon concerned, One in whom, as our Lord himſelf expreſſes it, *He had nothing*, drove him to that Neceſſity. But upon Us he ſteals unſeen, the Corruption of our Nature gives great Hold to faſten on; Our Paſſions and

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Affections, Our Ignorance and Infirmities, and all the neceſſary Conſequences of Our Original Weakneſs and Depravation, we cannot run away from. And, becauſe we carry theſe about us every where, he never can want fit Place or Opportunity for Temptation: For Theſe are in truth the Matter he works upon, and our own Thoughts, and Deſires, the Inſtruments he works by. As will appear more fully, if we conſider,

IV. *Fourthly*, The manner how our Saviour was tempted. In the *Firſt* Attempt the Devil takes occaſion from his Hunger to perſwade Him to work a Miracle for the ſatisfying it. In the *Second*, he puts Him upon an unneceſſary Experiment of God's preſerving Providence, and ſuch a Proof of being his Son, as the conſenting to would argue a Diſtruſt of the Evidence already given of it. And this he colours over, with a Text of Scripture pretended to countenance his Propoſal. In the *Third*, he entices him to an unlawful Act, with Promiſe of worldly Honours and Advantages. In all Three he forms his Attack upon thoſe Natural Appetites and Affections, which God hath put into Mankind; and which, it is evident from this Example, are never (ſtrictly ſpeaking) the Cauſes, but only the Accidental Occaſions of Sin. And not Occaſions neither, except we abuſe, and apply them irregularly.

Verſe 3. —— 5, 6.

It is not poſſible for any Man living to deſcribe all the ſubtle Acts of this Lier in wait to deceive. But, from the Inſtance now at hand, we may diſcover in general, That he ſtrikes in with Mens Wants and Neceſſities; with their different Tempers and Circumſtances in the World; with their governing Paſſions and darling Objects: That from Theſe, he labours to ſuggeſt ſuch Ideas; and even from the Authority of God himſelf, perverted to a wrong

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ſenſe, ſo to darken and perplex their Underſtandings, to kindle ſuch Deſires, to raiſe ſuch Affections, or to carry thoſe he finds in our Hearts to ſuch Exceſſes, as may put us upon Thoughts or Words, or Actions, that are exorbitant and ſinful. Mean while it is no leſs plain, that he only ſuggeſts, he only puts us upon Theſe: That here can be no Sin without our own Conſent: That he, who tries us, cannot compel us: That there is no hurt done, till the Temptation be ſuffered to prevail: And in a word, that Tempting is the Devil's Act, but Yielding, or Reſiſting, when we are tempted, is Ours. The Former is our Sin, the Latter is our Virtue. Conſequently, Temptations are capable of becoming Occaſions of either. Danger indeed there is, and This ſhould awaken our Care: but God, who ſuffers us to be tempted, hath not left us deſtitute of Helps and Means, which, if applied, as they may and ought to be, will ſucceed to our Advantage. For which this Portion of Scripture hath propounded our Saviour's Practice as a Pattern,

V. *Fifthly*, In the Method he took to repel theſe Attempts upon his Virtue. Which, you ſee all along, is by retorting Scripture upon the Tempter: The Authority of God oppoſed to his wicked Suggeſtions; The Word of God in its plain and natural Senſe, to the Word of the ſame God abuſed and miſapplyed.

This Word is, by St. *Paul*, very elegantly ſtiled, *The Sword of the Spirit*; An Inſtrument of Defence, which does not only ward off the Blows, but cut to pieces any Arms with which the Enemy can poſſibly aſſail us. For here we meet ſuch full and plain Directions for our Duty, as all the cunning Subterfuges of the Devil cannot perplex, cannot evade, when conſidered impartially and carefully. Here, ſuch great and precious Promiſes, that They, who attend to their Excellencies, cannot

Eph. vi. 17.

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but ſee incapable of any Equivalent; and, that the Tempter, when alluring them to Sin, though it were with *all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them*, bids them infinitely to their loſs. Here, Threatnings ſo dreadful, in caſe of Diſobedience, that all the Sufferings of the preſent time, all he can afflict or affright them with, are not to be feared, in compariſon of Him, who can *caſt Body and Soul into Hell*. Here, Precepts of ſuch perfect Holineſs, and Equity, and Wiſdom, that as oft as he perſwades Men to live and act contrary to Religion, 'tis evident he perſwades them to put out their Natural Light, and renounce their own Reaſon. Here again, Engagements and Aſſurances, the moſt expreſs that can be, of ſpiritual Aids and Strength, to Them who faithfully do their Part. Solemn Declarations, that though we *are not ſufficient of our ſelves, yet our ſufficiency is of God*; that in them *who work out their own Salvation with fear and trembling, God will work both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*; that *Him that cometh to Chriſt he will in no wiſe caſt out*; that his *grace is ſufficient for us, for his ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs*; that *God will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it*; that *He will never leave us, nor forſake us*; and that *greater is He that is in Us, than He that is in the World*. With many other like glorious Encouragements; which render our Sloth inexcuſable, and quite take off thoſe frivolous Pretences, with which Men ſometimes cover it, of the Difficulty of their Tryals, the Impracticableneſs of their Duty, and the Corruption and Frailty of Humane Nature. In ſhort, this is a Weapon, *quick and powerful*; it is ſuited to all Occaſions, and to all Perſons; it is edged with an Authority ſo ſacred, with Reaſons ſo enforcing,

2 Cor. iii. 5.
Phil. ii. 12, 13.
John 5. 37.
2 Cor. xii. 9.
1 Cor. x. 13.
Hebr. xiii. 5.
1 John iv. 4.

forcing, that They, who are capable of arguing juſtly, are here provided with Topicks of invincible Strength; and They, who want that Skill and Addreſs, if they bring but an honeſt Mind hither, will be able to defend themſelves, and baffle all the Sophiſtry of the Adverſary, with a bare *Thus it is written*, and, *The Lord hath ſpoken*.

Hence it is eaſy to perceive, of what abſolute Neceſſity, of what mighty Importance it cannot but be, to all ſorts of People, to be very converſant in the Book of God; to read, to ſtudy, to underſtand rightly the practical Parts of it eſpecially. In which there is no great Difficulty, to them who apply themſelves with a good Principle, and a ſincere Deſire to learn, and to obey it. For our Bountiful God hath in his Revelation dealt with the Souls, as in his Creatures he hath done with the Bodies, of Men: That, which is moſt neceſſary for Health and Suſtenance, is moſt common, and plain, and ready at hand. With this then let us fill our Memories, and lay in a Stock to be drawn out, as Occaſions call for it. But let it not reſt in our Memories alone, but rule in our Hearts, and influence our Affections, and be the meaſure of all our Actions. Thus it muſt do, to preſerve us in the day of Combat; Without this we fight naked, but thus armed we are always under guard, and ſhall prevent a world of Surpriſes, which thoſe thoughtleſs unprovided Creatures are over-powered by, who have their Weapons to ſeek, when they have immediate occaſion to uſe them. More particularly yet. Let every Man diligently enquire into his own Circumſtances; *The Sin that doth moſt eaſily beſet him*, the Paſſion he finds hardeſt to be conquered, the Temptations, to which his Condition or Buſineſs moſt expoſe him, the Infirmities and Frailties peculiar to his Age, or Temper, or Complexion; and be ſure to loſe no Time for laying in a Fund, (as out of ſo rich a

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Treaſure he quickly may) proper for theſe Exigencies: that none of theſe may any ſooner ſtart up, but ſome Scripture well digeſted may come up with it, and effectually bring it under again. This would be to imitate our Maſter's Wiſdom in a Point, of Advantage greater, than any thing elſe can, but our own Experience and almoſt incredible Succeſſes would ſoon, make us duly ſenſible of.

VI. Let us now, in the *Laſt* Place, caſt our Eye upon the Comforts, that followed our Lord's Temptation; expreſs'd at the *Eleventh* Verſe; *Then the Devil leaveth him, and behold Angels came and miniſtred unto him.* This we are told, ſhall not fail to be our caſe too: That, if we *reſiſt the Devil, he will flee from us*; and if we *draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh to us.* He will, by thoſe *miniſtring Spirits*, which are *ſent forth to miniſter unto them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*, protect and guard us from future Dangers; relieve thoſe Wants by a better and more effectual way, for the Supply whereof we would not ſubmit to any unlawful Courſes; reward our better Choice with the inexpreſſibly ſweet Satisfactions of a good Conſcience; a Peace and Joy, which the World and all its Pleaſures cannot give, which all its Afflictions cannot take away; And at laſt, through theſe Triumphs begun upon Earth, conduct us to that yet more perfect Bleſſedneſs, which ſhall abundantly recompenſe our Toils and Sufferings, and crown our Conſtancy, with Glory immortal in Heaven.

Jam. iv. 7, 8.

Hebr. i. 14.

I add but this word more, That the Account of our Lord's Abſtinence and Retirement, when about to enter upon the Exerciſe of his Prophetick Office, is very ſeaſonable at this time, when that Faſt approaches, which this Church hath thought fit to appoint, for the more effectual Imploring his Aſſiſtance,

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to Them, who are now about to be conſecrated to his Service. A Matter of mighty Conſequence to the whole Body of the faithful; Who, as they have a part in the Benefit, ſhould not grudge to take a part in this Solemn manner of ſeeking it. And of the laſt Conſequence to the Perſons, who thus appropriate themſelves to God; and have our Saviour's Example, for an Intimation, how neceſſary Preparations to this high Calling, Faſting and Prayer, getting above their Carnal Appetites, and diſingaging themſelves from the love and hurry of the World, are. All in truth have need more than enough, but None have greater than They, who are to be, not only Paſtors, but Patterns to Others; to beg of this *Lord, who for our ſakes faſted forty Days and forty Nights, grace to uſe ſuch abſtinence, that the fleſh being ſubdued to the Spirit, they may ever obey his godly motions in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs.* Even ſo Bleſſed *Jeſus, By thy Faſting and Temptation, Good Lord deliver us.*

The Second Sunday in Lent.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty God, who ſeeſt, that we have no Power of our ſelves, to help our ſelves: Keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls; that we may be defended from all Adverſities, which may happen to the Body; and from all evil thoughts, which may aſſault and hurt the Soul, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

2 Cor. xii. 9.
1 Pet. i. 5.
1 Theſſ. v. 23.

The EPISTLE.

1 Theſſ. iv. 1.

1. *WE beſeech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jeſus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more.*

PARAPHRASE.

1. We earneſtly conjure you, to live up to the Holy Rules, by which, we told you, God expects and delights to be ſerved, and that you would daily make farther improvements in Piety and Virtue.

2. This

2. This agrees with the Commands, which, tho' received at our Hands, are yet to be esteemed Christ's, as given by his Direction and Authority.

2. *For ye know what Commandments, we gave you by the Lord Jesus.*

3. *For this is the will of God, even your Sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*

4. *That every one of you should know how to possess his Vessel in Sanctification and Honour.*

5. That no Man should dishonour his Body, (which is the Vessel) the Dwelling and Instrument of his Soul; by Lusts of uncleanness; and such abominable Affections and Practises, as the ignorant Heathen indulged.

5. *Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God.*

6. That none especially invade anothers Right, or transgress the stated Bounds of such enjoyments, by either such Lusts as are injurious to Marriage, or against the use of Nature: for a severe Vengeance will certainly overtake all such.

6. *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.*

7. For the design of Christianity is to purify our Hearts and our Lives, and consequently, all unchast Practises are a contradiction to the End of it.

7. *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

8. And let him, who refuses Obedience to these Commands, know, that the Contempt lights upon God; whose Holy Spirit given to his Apostles is affronted, when their Authority is set at naught: and whose Spirit, given to every Christian at his Baptism, is grieved, and resisted, and driven away, when such pollute themselves, and prophane the dwelling he came to Sanctify.

8. *He therefore that despiseth despiseth not man, but God; who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

COMMENT.

BEfore we enter upon the Consideration of the Matter contained here, I conceive it necessary to establish the Construction my Phrase hath fixed upon the *Sixth* Verse, Which some Interpreters have understood of Covetousness, and over-reaching those we

we deal with in Civil Contracts. A Subject foreign to the reſt of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe in this Place, which is wholly employ'd upon the Sins of Uncleanneſs; And therefore, if the Words can reaſonably bear a Senſe agreeable to that Subject, this is a direction ſo to underſtand them.

Now, beſides that the Word, which we render *go beyond*, hath in its Etymology, and Affinity, a Relation to that very Act, by which unclean Deſires are gratified; It is farther obſervable, that the Other, tranſlated *Defraud*, hath been likewiſe applied to ſuch Gratifications of that kind, as are irregular and unreaſonable. The Word imports in general, aiming at more than ones ſhare, and is made the Character of the Covetous, who, from ſuch greedineſs, ſticks at no injuſtice to enrich himſelf. Hence, by an eaſie figure, it is transfer'd to the Carnal Man, who, to ſatisfie his Luſt, without regard to what is lawful and allowed him, invades his Neighbours Bed, or elſe lets himſelf looſe to ſuch Vices, as are quite beſide the Courſe of Nature. And thus the beſt Expoſitors have made this part conſiſtent with the reſt of the Apoſtle's Caution againſt Uncleanneſs, by applying the *Sixth* Verſe, Some to the Sin of Adultery, Others to that of Sodomy. In both which the Offender does πλεονεκτεῖν, take more than belongs to him, to compaſs his Deſires. And, for that Expreſſion, in *any* Matter, 'tis obſervable, that the Word *any* is not in the Original; ſo that, by reading, as literally we may, *in the matter*, this Conſtruction is ſtill more confirm'd. That being a modeſt Intimation, by a general term, of Actions, that can't with decency be particularly nam'd.

For the ſame reaſon, it muſt not be expected, that I ſhould enlarge upon the ſeveral ways, by which the Sin of Uncleanneſs pollutes. There is danger, even in deſcending to the Niceties of this Vice, leſt Inclinations ſo ſtrong by Nature, ſhould take an advantage

never intended them, and learn to refine upon Vice, from the very Ideas raised in their Minds, by those who only design these for their Instruction and Amendment. It shall suffice me therefore, upon this occasion, to remark, that the *Sanctification*, required by the Apostle, is a Virtue, extending to Mind and Body both: That all Gratifications of our fleshly Desires, out of the way of lawful Matrimony, whether committed upon and with Others, or even our own Persons, are unlawful Acts. That the Chastity, imploy'd in a single State, requires a total Abstinence from them all: And that of a Married Life is not at large from all Restraints, but expects such Moderation and Temper, as may preserve the Ends of Matrimony; continue it, what it was intended for; a holy and an honourable State; a Remedy, not an Incentive.

Matt. v. 18.

That, not only actual Commissions, but obscene Language, lascivious Looks, impure Thoughts indulged, immodest Behaviour, pampering and luxurious Diet to enflame our selves, industrious Endeavours to kindle those Fires, and attract first the Eyes, then the Desires of Others, all Coquettry and affectation in Dress, or Deportment, as have a tendency that way; These too come within the compass of Uncleanness. And, though they miss of the Effect, are rendred Guilty by the Intention.

The less capable this Subject is of being conveniently treated by Our Teachers, the more exact and curious it becomes private Persons to be, in the Examination of their own Consciences concerning it. Especially, since the Apostle hath used such pressing Motives, in the Scripture now before us, by saying, that our *Sanctification* is the Commandment of the Lord *Jesus*, and the *Will of God*; that the contrary affections are the Scandal of the *Gentiles, who know not God*, that Christians are *called, not unto uncleanness, but unto*

Verse 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

holiness

holineſs, and that any of theſe, who behave themſelves unſuitably to that Call, draw down Vengeance upon their own Head, and *deſpiſe God and the holy Spirit he hath given us*. The Sum of all which Paſſages may be reduced to this, That Sins of Uncleanneſs, in particular, are a high provocation to Almighty God, that they forfeit the Privilege, and defeat the Ends of, and derive the greateſt Scandal and Diſhonour upon, our Chriſtian Profeſſion.

1. How high and grevious a Provocation Theſe are to Almighty God, is evident from the many ſevere Threatnings denounced againſt them in the New Teſtament. Theſe declare, that *without Holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*; that this is a Bleſſing reſerved for *the pure in heart*; that *neither Fornicators nor Adulterers, nor the Effeminate, nor the abuſers of themſelves with mankind, ſhall inherit the kingdom of Chriſt and of God*: That *becauſe of theſe things his wrath cometh upon the children of diſobedience*; that ſuch *God will deſtroy*, and that by reaſon of *theſe vile affections* God ſuffered the very Heathen, who indulged them, to quench their Natural Light, and gave them up to the moſt infamous, and unmanly, and abſurd Luſts and Wickedneſſes.

Heb. xii. 14. Matt. v. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Coloſ. iii. 6. 1 Cor. iii. 17. Rom. i. 24. 28.

2. Among the Privileges of Chriſtianity, none are more valuable, none more eſſential to our Salvation, than thoſe of our Union with our Myſtical Head Chriſt Jeſus, and the preſence and perpetual aſſiſtance of that bleſſed Spirit, whereby this Union is effected and preſerved. But, by the inordinacy of theſe Luſts, we ſeparate our ſelves from Chriſt, we take the *Members of Him*, our Bodies, and *make them members of Harlots*. Thoſe Bodies, which are conſecrated to his Uſe and Service, and are become living *temples of the Lord*, by his Holy Spirit inhabiting there, we thus prophane, and ſacri-

1 Cor. vi. 15. 1 Cor. iii.

legiously alienate to vile and polluted Uses. Thus we at once dishonour the Deity, and the Body, in which, as in the Tabernacle of old, he chose to make his gracious Residence. Which is probably conceiv'd to be St. *Paul*'s meaning, at the 8th Verse here. The contemptuous Treatment, and horrible Indignity such People are guilty of, to that Spirit, bestowed upon every Christian, at his Baptism. So that, as these Vices have the peculiar aggravation of being Sins *a-*

1 Cor. vi. 18. *gainst our own Bodies*, they are likewise attended with that other, of despising, affronting, and driving away that Blessed Spirit, and his Grace, which, being a Spirit of Discipline and Purity, will not abide in those filthy dwellings, where such unrighteousness comes in, and takes possession. A very weighty Consideration, to deter us from such Wickedness, as by prostituting our own Persons, prostitutes the honour of God at the same time; and runs so manifest a risque of abandoning us to the most profligate and pernicious Courses, and delivering up our Souls to the uncontrouled Malice and Tyranny of the Devil.

3. The Ends of our Christian Profession are manifestly defeated by these Lusts and Practices. For so much is imply'd, Verse 7. *God hath not called us unto Uncleanness, but unto Holiness.* The main design of Religion is, as I have already had occasion to observe, to make us like God. If therefore the *Gentiles, who know not God*, gave themselves up to *work all uncleanness with greediness*, the wonder is not so great, the Crime not near so great; because owing to those false, and corrupt, and extravagant Notions of the Divine Nature, which, by such Ignorance, had obtained in the World. For, how should they frame themselves aright, who never understood the Model they were to frame by? But the Christian Faith gives us just and true Notions, of God, and of our Selves. By teach-

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ing us, that He is a Spirit, perfect and pure, removed far above all thoſe Paſſions, which, by being joyned to mortal and material Bodies, we feel Our Spirits ſubject to. That this Conjunction ſets us, as it were, upon the Confines of the Spiritual and Material World; and produces a perpetual conflict, between the Affections proper to a Rational Soul, in which we reſemble God; and thoſe of a Senſitive, in which the Brutes ſeem to carry ſome reſemblance of Us. Conſequently, The more we give way to Senſuality, the lower we ſink our ſelves, and remove at a ſtill greater diſtance from God. And, the only courſe we can take, to raiſe and get nearer to him, is by trampling down, and keeping under thoſe Deſires and Paſſions, which the Condition of the Fleſh, we carry about with us, kindles and cheriſhes: To exalt and refine our Souls, by fixing them upon Objects, that are ſuitable to the immortality of their Nature, and approach to the Perfections of Him, whoſe Image and Character they bear. In the compaſſing this End, we are favoured and forwarded, not only by that more perfect Underſtanding of God and his Excellencies, which the Goſpel helps us to; not only by that better Senſe of the Dignity of our own Nature, which the Doctrines of it inſpire; but alſo by that proſpect of our true and perfect Happineſs, the Diſcovery and the Aſſurance of thoſe pure and ſpiritual Joys, in a State, for which we were created; and to which we muſt aſpire, by ſuch diſpoſitions even in this Life, as may make us *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*. How neceſſary a preparation for that Bliſs ſuch a Temper and turn of Mind muſt needs be, hath been formerly ſaid: And I need not add, that, if ſuch be our Caſe, the End of Chriſtianity muſt be utterly loſt and defeated, by the Vice I am treating of. It being manifeſt to daily Obſervation

Epiſt. for the Sixth Sunday after *Epiph.*

and common Senſe, that the Luſts of Uncleanneſs indulged do, perhaps above any other Sin, eſtrange the Heart from God, create a diſreliſh of every thing that is Holy and Good, darken the Underſtanding, vitiate the Will, debaſe the Spirit, waſt the Conſcience, quench the Motions of Grace, produce firſt a Neglect, then a Contempt of Religion, deſtroy and deface all Principles even of Juſtice, and Honour, and natural Modeſty and Decency; make Men ſubmit to the baſeſt Arts for compaſſing their filthy Purpoſes, harden them in Impudence and Beaſtlineſs, enervate the Mind, conſume the Body; In a Word, unman the One Sex, lay the Glory of the Other in common, and make ſuch Monſters of Both, that not only Revelation, but natural Reaſon, condemns and acknowledges the deformity of theſe Sins; by covering them with Shame, and aſcribing to them that moſt rightful Denomination of *Vile* and diſhonourable Luſts.

Πάθη ἀτιμίας. Rom. i.

This is but a ſmall part of what might be ſaid againſt a Corruption, the Indulgence whereof is ſo far from conſiſting with the Character of Chriſtians, that it ſcarce leaves us Men: So far from any likeneſs to the Great and Holy God, that the moſt obſcene and deteſtable Brutes are our Copy. My Subject leads me not ſo directly to mention the Diſeaſes of Body, the Ruine of Eſtates, the Confuſion of Families, the indelible Stain and Reproach, which God in his juſt Judgment inflicts, and hath indeed made natural Conſequences, upon Uncleanneſs. Well were it, if not only Theſe, but the many Publick and National Evils, drawn down upon whole Communities, were ſeriouſly laid to Heart on this occaſion. All little enough for the Age we are fallen into, when ſo many great Examples have given Countenance to this Vice, as, if it were poſſible, almoſt to erace thoſe Impreſ-

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ſions of Shame, which Nature ſeems particularly careful to have provided, for a guard againſt it. The ſame care ſhould be Ours; To keep up a juſt abhorrence of all unlawful Compliances this way. And, the ſtronger Inclinations we feel in our ſelves, the more importunately the Tempter Sollicits us; the more ſtill to beware of this fataleſt of his Snares, and ſtrengthen our ſelves with the firmer Reſolutions, not to proſtitute our Bodies and our Souls, not to Sell our preſent Happineſs and our future Hopes, not to Affront our Saviour, and defecrate his Temple, and drive away his Spirit, for the treacherous Delights of a Moment, to be embittered by the Shame and the Torments of Eternity.

Mean while, we cannot, I ſhould think, be inſenſible, how properly this Exhortation of the Apoſtle is now made choice of to employ our Thoughts. Seaſonably, in regard of that Exerciſe of Repentance, we are preſumed to have entred upon; for no one Sinful habit can threaten greater Danger, or deſerve a greater meaſure of Repentance, than this. Seaſonably, as all our Mortifications will be rejected for Hypocriſie and Mockery, if *we cleanſe not our ſelves from the filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, in order to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.* 2 Cor. vii. 1. Seaſonably, as the Faſtings, and other Acts of Severity and Self-denial, are helps and Remedies againſt Sin, by correcting thoſe Rankneſſes and Redundance of Spirits, which Eaſe and Free-living certainly leave behind: They cut off thoſe luxurancies of Nature, take away the Matter which the Tempter's Suggeſtion works upon; and put us in a better Condition of ſtanding our Ground, and gaining the Fort within, by ſtarving out the Enemy's Forces, that lye Entrenched there.

It muſt not be forgotten, that all our own Powers in this Engagement are frequently too weak. Our

Matt. xix. 1 Cor. vii.

Bleſſed Saviour, and St. *Paul*, do both ſpeak of Continence, as a ſpecial Gift of God. And hence they, who find it not beſtowed in Virginal, are adviſed to ſeek it in the way of Matrimonial, Chaſtity. The Graces proper to both are indeed ſo neceſſary an Ornament to Chriſtians, but withal ſo entirely owing to the Father of Lights, that, unleſs they deſcend from above, we muſt deſpair of attaining them at all. Prayer, as well as Faſting, muſt contribute to the caſting out of this unclean Devil from within. And therefore nothing could be better accommodated to the Subject of this Epiſtle, than the Collect, by which it is introduced, and than which I cannot think of a more pertinent Concluſion to this Diſcourſe.

Almighty God, who ſeeſt that we have no power of our ſelves to help our ſelves. Keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be defended from all Adverſities, which may happen to the Body, and from all Evil Thoughts which may aſſault and hurt the Soul, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

The Second Sunday in Lent.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE. St. *Matt.* XV. 21.

21. Jeſus went from *Capernaum*, to the Coaſts, *&c.* and entred into a Houſe to conceal his being there, but that could not be done (See *Mark* vii. 24.).

21. *JEſus went thence, and departed into the coaſts of Tyre and Sidom.*

22. A Woman of *Phenice*, where it borders upon *Syria*, called therefore a *Sycophenician*, and (becauſe the ſame Country is alſo called *Canaan*, here ſtyled a Woman of *Canaan*) came, *&c.* (See *Mark* vii. 26.)

22. *And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried unto him, ſaying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil.*

23. *But*

23. *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away, for she crieth after us.*

24. *But he answered and said, I am not sent, but unto the lost Sheep of the house of Israel.*

24. He reply'd, that the Benefit of his Miracles and Doctrine was a Privilege at present intended for *Jews* only; not for *Gentiles*, such as this Woman was. (See *Mark* vii. 26. and Margin there.

25. *Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord help me.*

26. *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the Children's bread, and cast it to dogs.*

27. *And she said, Truth Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table.*

28. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

28. This saying shews thee qualified for the Mercy thou hast so importunately beg'd. (*Mark* vii. 29.)

COMMENT.

THAT Prayer is a Duty more especially to be attended upon at this Season, the very Nature of it infers; The joining it so often with Fasting in Scripture, the Helps it hath been proved to receive from such Abstinence, and the necessity of applying to God for some Graces, out of our own power, puts it beyond a Doubt. Such in particular, I have said, is that Purity, so earnestly recommended, in the Epistle for the Day. But, in regard it does not always happen, that our Petitions are granted so soon, either as we make them, or as we expect a return to them: Nothing could be more proper and methodical, than for the Church on this occasion, to encourage our Importunity, and Continuance in Prayer. Nothing could more encourage this, than so successful an Instance of it, as the Miracle related in the Gospel now before us, when considered in all its parts, will appear plainly to contain.

Ash-wednesday.

An

An afflicted Mother here implores Christ's Help, with all the tender Concern, becoming that Relation; with all the vehemence, that we can suppose her excited to, by a Calamity so terrible, as a *Daughter grievously vexed with a Devil.* Her Cries are silently passed over; though so loud and troublesome, that our Lord's Disciples, either in compassion to the sadness of her Case, or desirous to be eased of so clamourous an Importunity, turn Advocates for her. The Answer they received was very discouraging, and seem'd to imply a Resolution, not to grant a Favour, which was irregular, and beside both the Methods and the Design of his present Mission. This notwithstanding, she pursues her Request; but, instead of any Signs of relenting, is answered with a Proverb, upbraiding her unworthiness, seemingly chiding her Presumption in conceiving any Hopes of it; and indeed carrying such an appearance of hard-heartedness and scorn, as one would rather have expected out of the Mouth of a haughty Pharisee, than from the meek and merciful Jesus. Still she desists not, is content to be reckoned as a *Dog*, in comparison of the Jews, who had the honour of being treated as Children. But from hence she forms an Argument, to put in for a Dog's Portion at least. One Miracle in Her behalf, bearing but the Proportion of a Dog's share, to the numberless Mercies of that kind, wrought for and among the Jews: the Crumbs that fall, compared to their full Table. And then our Lord at last does not only gratify that Application, which before he in appearance disallowed, but even commend, and do it signal Honour. For it was in appearance only, that he disallowed it before, and those Repulses were all for the Petitioner's Advantage. This is the Substance of the Scripture in hand, describing a Managery very usual with Almighty God, who is often thought to hide his Face from us,

and

and ſhut his Ears againſt our Complaints, when yet he never means us any unkindneſs or refuſal. And, ſince this Womans Caſe is now to be conſidered, as an Example of ſuch Proceedings; the Improvement to be made of it, is, Firſt, To obſerve, wherein that Faith conſiſted, by which ſhe gained her Point, that This may be imitated by us; And, Secondly, To examine, What probable Account may be given of God's deferring to anſwer thoſe Prayers, which he never intended wholly to deny.

1. I begin with the Former of thoſe Conſiderations, The Nature of that Faith, which ſucceeded ſo well, and was ſo highly applauded by Chriſt, in this *Canaanitiſh* Woman. Now This, taken in it ſelf, could be no other than a firm Perſwaſion of our Lord's Power and Goodneſs: concerning which I had occaſion to ſay ſomewhat heretofore: The Expreſſions of this Faith too, as far as they concern her Humility, and the Fervency of her Zeal; were then ſo treated of, as to render any farther Enlargements upon them unneceſſary now. But in this the Caſes differ, that the *Leper*, then our Pattern, was healed without delay; this Woman's Daughter not ſo. And therefore One remarkable Qualification remains, which ſignalized Her Faith, even Perſeverance in Prayer. *Goſpel for the third Sunday after* Epiphany.

The very Terms, in which our Lord hath encouraged and commanded us to Pray, do evidently make this a Duty. When he bids us to ask; It is not his meaning, that we ſhould grow ſullenly ſilent, if not heard at the firſt word. For he adds *Seeking*, and *Knocking*, which imply continuing our Search till we have found, and ſtanding at the Door till he think fit to open to us. To the ſame purpoſe he delivered thoſe Parables; Of a Man in Want obtaining, by the force Matth. vii. 7. Luke xi.

of

of Importunity, a Kindneſs, at a time of Night ſo unſeaſonable, that the Conſiderations of Friendſhip could not otherwiſe have prevailed for it: And that other of a Poor Widow under Oppreſſi-

Luke xviii. on, who by continual Application wearied even a barbarous and profligate Judge into Juſtice: And ſo an Example fitted to inſtruct us, that we ought to *continue inſtant in Prayer*, and not be diſcouraged by any Difficulties we lye under, though God do not preſently comply with our Requeſts. If therefore the Bleſſings we ask are worth our Pains and waiting for; and if it be certain, that every delay of ſuch Bleſſings is not to be interpreted an abſolute Denial; all reaſonable ground for deſiſting is taken away: And our Practice to Men will ſuffice to teach us the Meaſures fit to be taken, in our Addreſſes to Almighty God.

For, what Attendance, what Aſſiduity do we employ, to compaſs the mean Advantages of the preſent Life? What Pains do we take to thruſt our ſelves into the Preſence of Princes and Great Men, that the very ſight of us may keep up our Pretenſions, and beg in a Language, which Courts very well underſtand? What Difficulties are we content with, to get Acceſs? And, when this is allowed us, what Coldneſs and Diſdain, what Repulſes and Affronts do we tamely put up, and ſuffer our Patience for many Years to be exerciſed with? How do we flatter our ſelves, in deſpight of all Diſappointments, and what forced Conſtructions do we put upon every Indignity, that it may not paſs for a final Refuſing? And all this very often, for a thing of no great Conſequence, ſuch as ſeldom makes amends for the Fatigue and Expence we have been at about it? And yet neither our own Experience, nor the Examples of thoſe many, who ſucceed at length upon ſo hard Terms, and to ſo little purpoſe; Nor of Thoſe many more, who never

ſucceed

ſucceed at all, will ſuffice, either to diſcourage the making of new, or to diſcontinue our old Addreſſes of this kind.

Now, Whence is all this, but from the eagerneſs of our Deſires, and the Value we fondly hold thoſe Advantages in, which we ſo induſtriouſly court, ſo obſtinately purſue? And, whence that Haſtineſs and Impatience, that Wearineſs and Fainting, that ſitting down in Deſpair, and quickly concluding our Petitions rejected and unprofitable, ſo uſual in our Applications to Almighty God; but from a Diſeſteem of the Mercies we ſue for, want of a due ſenſe of their Conſequence, of their Neceſſity, to us, and thereupon an Indifference, whether they come or no? But eſpecially, Why this falſe, this blameable Modeſty in One caſe, Why that indefatigable Confidence in the Other; where the Perſons addreſs'd to are of Diſpoſitions ſo very different? Why that never giving over to hope and to beg, where we are frequently deceived, and forced Dependencies are troubleſome? And why this deſiſting ſo quickly, with One, who never did or can deceive us; with One, to whom our Truſt is always pleaſing, and our Importunity it ſelf ſerves more effectually to recommend us?

That thus it is with Men, our own Experience, that thus with God, the Scriptures already produced on this occaſion, may abundantly convince us. And the difference ſo remarkable between them may without any great Difficulty be accounted for. In God, we know, there is no end of Goodneſs, no end of Power; In Men, both theſe are ſhut up within very narrow bounds. To preſs Them is therefore ſhocking, becauſe this is, by a ſide Wind, to upbraid them, either with want of Ability, or of Sincerity, or of Inclination to do good: And theſe are Qualities, which every one is deſirous either to have, or at leaſt to be thought to have; So that, whatever implicitely denies,

denies, or, by natural Conſtruction, calls them into queſtion, carries with it a Reproach not eaſie to be born. But God, who is Power, and Truth, and Love it ſelf, is above all ſuch Reflections; Our Neceſſities cannot exhauſt him, and therefore our Requeſts for the ſupply of them cannot offend him. He that made us, needs not be changed, by any Arguments we can uſe, to draw his Kindneſs and Affection to us: And therefore his very Withholdings and Delays are kindly meant. And the continuing to ask is a Demonſtration of our being ſatisfied, that they are ſo. For letting alone any farther Application is a natural conſequence of taking our former Uſage ill. But repeating the ſame with Confidence argues a Spirit eaſie and reſign'd; confeſſes his Goodneſs, and our own Unworthineſs; clears us of any unbecoming Reſentments, and ſpeaks us contented to wait his good leiſure, for the ſatisfying our moſt earneſt and important Deſires, and even, as we may think, moſt reaſonable Expectations. For ſuch without queſtion they are, if granted at laſt. Which makes it neceſſary therefore to conſider, in the

II. *Second* place, What account may be given of God's delaying to anſwer thoſe Prayers, which he never intended abſolutely to deny. Now this may be done,

1. With a deſign to increaſe our Virtue, to render it more conſpicuous, and ſo to prove us more fit for, and worthy of the Bleſſings we apply to him for. Thus it was plainly in the Subject of this Day's Goſpel. Had the *Canaaniti∫h* Woman been gratified upon her firſt Suit: She had not made ſo noble a Figure in the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Miracles. And the eaſineſs of obtaining a Favour, to which, as a Stranger to *Iſrael*, She had no manner of Claim, had been Matter of Offence to the *Jews*. But the frequent Repulſes, She ſo bravely ſuſtained, took off all

ground

ground of Exception, juſtified our Lord in going out of his common Method, and made this *Greek* a pattern even to Chriſtians of all future Ages. And, in like manner, does our heavenly Father deal with his Children upon all occaſions. He tries thoſe tempers, by ſuſpending his Mercies, which Indulgence, and Readineſs to give, are apt to ſpoil. He makes us feel our dependence, and trains us up to Patience, and Reſignation, to Truſt, and Conſtancy. For indeed we are not fit to receive, till perfectly ſatisfied, that He is the propereſt Judge, when, as well as how, and what to give? and that, in all theſe regards, he proceeds upon Reaſons, not only wiſe in themſelves, but beneficial to Us.

2. Theſe Delays are very uſeful, in order to keep up the Value of the Good things we ask. Of which, though that very act of asking teſtify ſome Eſteem, yet will this naturally riſe, by continuing longer without them. In theſe Bodies we live ſo much by Senſe, that nothing affects us ſtrongly, which does not make ſome conſiderable change in our Condition: Nor are we moved by Objects from without, according as they are in themſelves, but according as We apprehend of them. So that it is not only the Want, but the feeling we have of that Want more eſpecially, that recommends the Bleſſing of a Supply to us. Hence, without doubt, it is, that we reſent in ſo very different a manner, the Mercy of a conſtant State of Health, and that of Recovery from a dangerous Fit of Sickneſs; Eaſe, and Safety, and uninterrupted Proſperity on one Hand; and Deliverance from exquiſite Pain, imminent Deſtruction, or ſome very afflicting Calamity, on the other. No Man in his Reaſon will ſay, that the former are not better and more deſirable in themſelves: and yet every Man muſt allow, that the latter are more welcome, and Matter of of greater Joy, to Us. Inſomuch, that even the

Sweets

Sweets of Life would ſoon grow flat, inſipid, and nauſeous; were it not for a mixture of Sharp and Bitter, that quicken, and raiſe the Taſt of them to us. This Obſervation, applied to the Benefits we ask at God's Hands, ſhews his Delays in granting to be for our Advantage. Becauſe, the longer we need them, the more ſenſible we are that we need them, and the more comfort we take in them when we have them. Nor is this all; But even our Expectations are placed to Account; provided we behave our ſelves in them as we ought. For he hath condeſcended to call himſelf the Good-Man's Debtor: And he is the only Debtor, that loves to be perpetually called upon for Payment; That rewards Importunity with larger Intereſt. And this is our Caſe, that we do not only reliſh what he gives the better for ſtaying, but the longer we wait, the more bountifully he gives at laſt.

Prov. xix. 17.

What other Reaſons ſoever have uſually been, or may be alledged on this Occaſion, will, if, I miſtake not, be eaſily reducible to Theſe Two. And therefore I only add a few Cautions, neceſſary to be taken along with us, and ſo Conclude.

Now *Firſt*. When I affirm the Delays we have been conſidering, to tend to our Good, I deſire it may be underſtood of our Spiritual Good. The Advancement of our Vertue here, and the Addition to our Reward hereafter. Which are indeed ſo properly the Good of a Man, and of a Chriſtian, that nothing elſe deſerves that Title, excepting ſo far forth, as it is ſome way Subſervient to, and helps to promote theſe great Ends.

Secondly, The requiring this Importunity in Prayer muſt not be ſo interpreted, as if God could take any delight in it, for its own ſake, but he values it for the Effects it produces in Us. He is not like thoſe haughty Eaſtern Monarchs, who take a pride to ſee

a number of poor depending Creatures lye proſtrate at their Foot. He is not to be conquered by many, or cajoled by fair Words: But he will have us Pray, and perſevere in it, purely for our own Benefit. He hath made it a Condition of obtaining our Requeſts, becauſe it will certainly bring our Minds to ſuch a frame, as Religion is deſigned to make them of. For Prayer hath a vaſt influence upon the Diſpoſitions and Actions of Men. We cannot be frequent and ſerious in it, without becoming better. And we cannot leave it off, or grow cold or formal in it, without degenerating and growing worſe, in the general Courſe of our Lives. Nor is it any Change, which our Prayers make in God, but the Change they make in our ſelves, which is the Cauſe of our Succeſs. For he is unchangeably determined to grant, or not to grant, according as Men do, or do not, perform the Conditions he hath fixed for granting. And therefore all depends upon Our Qualifications, and Fitneſs, to receive that, which he is always ready to give, when we are duly qualified. And nothing hath ſo direct a tendency to render us proper Objects of his Mercy, (that is, truly good Men) as frequent and fervent Prayer.

Laſtly. It is neceſſary we conſider the true Uſe and End of ſuch Prayer. It is to beg of God, that he will do for us, that which we cannot do for our ſelves; but then this ſuppoſes, that we ſhould do all that we can for our ſelves, and depend upon Him for the reſt. So that a Man, who, for the purpoſe, asks of God his *daily Bread*, without uſing his own Induſtry to get it, by ſuch lawful Methods, as Providence hath put into his Hands, does not make the right uſe of Prayer. And He, that begs not to be *led into Temptation*, without watching, and ſtriving, and ſhunning the occaſions of Sin; does not ſo properly worſhip God, as mock him. Let Us do Our

parts, and then we are fit to ask that God would, and may be very confident that he will, do His. But, ſince our own Endeavours are made a Condition of Succeſs in this Affair, to ask new Graces, without improving thoſe we have already, is vain and impious. We acknowledge indeed, in the Collect for this Day, that *we are not able of our ſelves to help or keep our ſelves:* but this is no ground for our preſuming, that God will help or keep Them, who take no care at all to do what they are enabled, though they are not able to do the whole that is neceſſary for this purpoſe. For He that made us without our concurrence, will not ſave us without it. And we muſt *work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling*, if we would be heard in thoſe Prayers, which entreat Him to *work in us both to will, and to do of his good pleaſure.*

The Third Sunday in Lent.

The COLLECT.

WE beſeech thee, Almighty God, look upon the hearty Deſires of thy humble Servants, and ſtretch forth the right hand of thy Majeſty, to be our defence againſt all our Enemies, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE. Epheſ. i. 5.

1. Since then God hath been ſo good to you (See Chap. iv. 32. conſider your relation to, and let that provoke you to a reſemblance of, Him.

1. *BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children,*

2. Let your love too be like that of Chriſt's to us, who was content to become a Sacrifice, by which God was atoned for our faults.

2. *And walk in love, as Chriſt alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an Offering, and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour.*

3. But

3. *But fornication, and uncleanneſs, or covetouſneſs, let it not be once named among you, as becometh Saints;*

3. But for unclean and inordinate Luſts be ſo far from practiſing, as to abhor the very mention of them, for ſo, as Chriſtians, you ought to do.

4. *Neither filthineſs, nor fooliſh talking, nor jeſting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.*

4. The like caution you ſhould uſe with regard to ſcurrilous and obſcene talk, a thing by no means agreeable to your Character. But let your Mirth be expreſs'd in Thankſgiving, or (as St. *Jerome*) in graceful and becoming Diſcourſe.

5. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean perſon, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God.*

6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience.*

7. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them*

7. Do not therefore ſhare in the guilt of ſuch Men, by giving them any Approbation or Countenance, much leſs by committing the ſame Sins.

8. *For ye were ſometimes darkneſs, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light.*

8. For conſider, how your Circumſtances are changed from a State of Ignorance, to one of clear Knowledge, in Jeſus and his Goſpel; and let your Practice be ſuch as becomes this Knowledge.

9. *(For the fruit of the ſpirit is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth)*

9. (For all manner of Goodneſs, &c. are the Effects, which the Grace of the Holy Spirit is expected to produce in your Minds and Converſations.)

10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

10. Thus it is that you muſt ſtudy and ſhew your knowledge and good liking of, that which our Lord hath declared he likes.

11. *And have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.*

11. And have nothing to do with the Wickedneſs of the ignorant Heathen, but uſe all fitting means of putting it to Shame.

12. *For it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things which are done of them in ſecret.*

12. For indeed the very Myſteries of their Religion are ſo vile, as not to be told, without offence to modeſt Ears.

13. *But all things that are reproved are made manifeſt by the light, for whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light.*

13. But the Light of the Goſpel diſcovers and expoſes them; for this is the nature and buſineſs of Light to detect the things which Darkneſs would conceal.

14. So that to this good Effect may not unfitly be applied those Paſſages of the Prophet (*Iſai.* xxvi. 19. lx. 1.) which deſcribe the Coming and Kingdom of Chriſt, as means of raiſing Men from Death, rouzing them from Sleep, and bringing them out of a thick Night of Error and Ignorance, and Vice, into the bright Shine of Knowledge and Virtue.

14. *Wherefore he ſaith, Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.*

COMMENT.

THE Chapter next before had concluded with an Exhortation to Meekneſs, and Charity, and Pardon of Injuries; enforced with a Motive, taken from the remembrance of God's Goodneſs in forgiving us. This Argument will offer it ſelf to our Conſideration hereafter. The Obligation we lye under to imitate ſuch Goodneſs, is, in the beginning of this Chapter, farther urged, from the Relation, which already is, and conſequently, the Reſemblance there ought to be, between God and us, conſidered in the Capacity of Father and Children. The force of that Conſideration hath been formerly treated of. To another, which backs it here, I ſhall ſpeak very briefly, and then proceed to ſome other Particulars, intended to make the principal Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe.

Ch. iv. 31. 32. *Goſpel for* 22*d. Sunday after* Trinity.

Epiſt. for Sunday after Chriſtmas.

Not content then with the ſingle Example of God the Father's Love in forgiving, the Apoſtle propoſes for our Pattern, that alſo of God the Son, in offering himſelf a Sacrifice, thereby to purchaſe this Forgiveneſs for us. And what were We, that ſo marvellous an Inſtance of Kindneſs and Condeſcenſion ſhould be exhibited in our favour? And what was He, that He ſhould vouchſafe that Favour? We Creatures, Sinners, Enemies, Rebels; He our Creator, our Lawgiver, our Benefactor, our Lord: We conſequently had all the Demerit, He all the Provocation, that habitual Diſobedience, and Ingratitude, and Obſtinacy

ſtinacy could create. If then this Perſon, ſo far Superior, ſo juſtly incenſed, did not only remit, but, at the expence of infinite Afflictions and Sufferings, of Agonies, and Blood, and Life it ſelf, expiate the very Sins, by which himſelf was injured; How can We inſiſt upon rigorous Terms of Satisfaction, with thoſe, between whom and our ſelves there can be nothing like, to either the Diſtance and Dignity of the Party offended, or the number and quality of the Offences committed? But eſpecially, In regard this Divine Perſon ſubmitted to be Sacrificed, not for You, or Me, or a Few only, but for all Mankind, and, by ſo doing, is become their common Saviour, does not diſdain to call them all Brethren, is Their Myſtical Head, and They his Members, provided They accept the Terms of this Saving Union; How can We purſue with our angry Reſentments, thoſe who are now parts of Him; and who, for His Sake, if not for their own, have a right to all our Charity? He dyed not only as our Ranſom, but as our Example; and 'tis St. *John*'s Inference, *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* 1 John iii. 16. And, if the Obligation run ſo high, if even that, which Nature hath made deareſt to us all, muſt not be thought too coſtly a Proof of our Kindneſs, when a proper Occaſion ſhall demand it of us; Let Them reflect, what Account they can give of themſelves, and whether that be Chriſtian Charity, which refuſes to ſacrifice a Paſſion, which grudges a very little Coſt, or Pains, or Condeſcenſion, to the Eaſe and Benefit of an Offending or a Needy Brother? Nay, let them think, how, at the laſt great Day, they ſhall be able to hear the Upbraidings of a Judge, who hath declared, he places to his own Account all Acts of Mercy and Kindneſs to theſe Brethren, and yet could obtain no manner of Requital, from ſuch in-

fenſible Wretches, for his own unexampled Bounty. So much, indeed a great deal more, there is in that ſhort Exhortation, *Walk in love, as Chriſt* Verſe 2. *alſo hath loved us, and hath given himſelf for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling Savour.*

The remainder of this days Epiſtle is, in the general Deſign, and Subſtance, much the ſame with That read laſt Sunday. The Vices he would correct, or prevent, the ſame. The Arguments to deter Men from them, the ſame. So that my Reader may, if his Memory ſtand in need, be there refreſhed, as to the nature of the Crimes. And for the Contradiction and Scandal they are to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, not only there, but in the ſeveral Diſcourſes here referr'd to, which have prevented me in the main Argument of the Scripture now in hand. Mean while the Dangers and the Temptations in this particular Caſe are ſo exceeding great, that our Church hath thought *Precept upon Precept* little enough: and ſo to preſs the Matter upon our Conſciences, as to diſcharge the Office of a careful and tender Mother, by guarding all her Children againſt the very Approaches of the Enemy. To which purpoſe I take thoſe Rules for Converſation to be of ſingular uſe, which may be drawn from the 4th. and 11th. Verſes here, ſomewhat to each whereof I ſhall ſet my ſelf to ſay at this time.

Epiſt. for Advent *Sunday* 1. *Epiſt. for* Epiphany.

After having, at the 3d. Verſe, utterly exterminated *Fornication* and *all Uncleanneſs* in Practice, the Apoſtle proceeds, at the 4th. to paſs the ſame Sentence upon *Filthineſs*, and *fooliſh Talking*, and *Jeſting*, as things alſo diſagreeable to the Character of Chriſtians. A Caution highly reaſonable and neceſſary, upon the following Accounts.

1. If

1. If we consider the use of Speech in general. A Prerogative peculiar to Mankind, and fitted for the Benefit and Comfort of a Creature formed for Society. By this we transmit to others, with great ease and freedom and exactness, the Thoughts of our own Minds; and become capable of diffusing the Riches of that Knowledge in a Moment, the gathering whereof may have cost us the Pains and Study of many Years. And to such Purposes no doubt it was, that the Giver of this Faculty design'd it should be employed; The setting forth his Honour; (for which reason some suppose *David* to have given to the Tongue the Titles of *his Glory*, and *the best Member that he had*) The Instruction of our Brethren, and promoting their Virtue; whence St. *Paul*, in the 4th. of this Epistle, requires that all our Conversation should be *edifying*; at least *not corrupt*, but the innocent Entertainment of those, with whom we converse; that so the Power granted us of making other People wiser and better, may not be so far perverted, as to render them the worse. For this were such a Reproach and Affront to our Maker, such vile Ingratitude to our bountiful Benefactor, as a Learned *Jew* not unfitly compares, to that Disingenuity of the *Israelites* heretofore; Who, forgetting whence, and why, it came into their Hands, profaned that *Gold and Silver*, which the Blessing of the true God had *multiplied*, by melting it down into Images, and devoting it to the Service and Worship of *Baal*.

Pf. 58. & 108.

Verse 28.

Maim more Nevoch P. iii. & 8.

Hos. ii. 8.

2. The reasonableness of this Caution will farther appear to us, if we reflect at all upon the Mischiefs, that follow upon the abuse of Speech. I speak not now of those, which the Sin of it draws upon the Guilty Person himself; but of such, as fall upon Them, with whom we keep company. And These

indeed are infinite. For with the ſame eaſe are both good and evil Notions conveyed, but by no means both with the ſame Efficacy and Succeſs. To fix the Good, and form our Acquaintance into our Virtues and commendable Diſpoſitions, asks Labour, and Skill, and a world of Management and Addreſs; Becauſe we have a Natural Corruption to work againſt, and many Prejudices to diſlodge, before we can get acceſs to them. But the Evil find us diſpoſed and ready to their hand; Our Hearts are open, our Affections meet them half way; and Impreſſions are quickly made, and hardly defaced, which flatter Appetite, ſtrike in with Inclination, and promote the Gratifications of Fleſh and Senſe. Experience daily ſhews, how much eaſier it is to debauch a Man, and unſettle all his right Principles; than it is to reform him, and clear him of thoſe, that are corrupt. The Former may be effected by Sport and Diverſion, The Latter is Buſineſs, and requires much Application. In order to This, he muſt think and be ſerious, For That, it ſuffices that he do not think at all. The Sallies of a ſmart but undiſciplin'd Wit ſerve to laugh Men out of their Sobriety and Religion. Nay even an uncommon Expreſſion, that makes up in Confidence and Surprize, what it wants in Wit, is often able to expoſe the beſt and moſt Sacred, and to recommend the worſt and vileſt things; To wound a Neighbour's Reputation mortally, or to diminiſh the Reverence due to God himſelf. So dangerous are all Affectations of this kind, to ingratiate our ſelves to our Company, at the expence of Piety, or Juſtice, Sober Senſe, or Good Manners. Of ſo pernicious Influence thoſe Liberties, which are apt to ſtick by them, that hear and ſee them taken; to draw them firſt to Liking, and then to Imitation. And therefore, to all, who retain any Belief and Apprehenſion of a Future Judgment, ſo dreadful muſt appear the

Conſequence,

Conſequence of enflaming our own Account, by the Addition of thoſe Sins in others, which ſuch Converſation hath inſpired, or encouraged; and, by thus making Our Manners Theirs, hath in proportion transferred Their Guilt, and made That to become Ours.

3. But, Thirdly, This Guilt and Danger hath ſome Circumſtances of Aggravation, peculiar to the Caſe now under debate. St. *Paul*, who, in other Inſtances, adviſes to ſtand our Ground againſt Temptations, and fight it out manfully, hath counſell'd his Son *Timothy* to *flee* from *youthful Luſts*. The reaſon for preſcribing ſo different a Method ſeems to be, that the Enemy, in this Attack, is favoured by ſo ſtrong a party within, that the ſafeſt Courſe is to ſave our ſelves, not by a formal Repulſe, but by giving him a Diverſion. Hence Solitude, and even Religious Retirements, have ſometimes been found a leſs powerful Defence, than Buſineſs and Company. But then that Company muſt not be ſuch, as ſhall repeat and double our difficulty, by ſtrengthning the Poiſon, inſtead of proving our Antidote. And indeed that Company muſt be very ill choſen, that does ſo. Nature ſeems to have left us ſufficient directions in this Matter, and, by confining ſome neceſſary Actions, to places of Secrecy and Darkneſs, to ſay, that every thing relating to them ſhould be kept up cloſe in Silence. The Learned *Rabbi*, quoted juſt now, makes it an Intimation, how hateful all Obſcenity is to God, that, in the Language taught his own People, there are no Words expreſſing, either thoſe parts, or the Uſes ſerved by them, which modeſty labours to conceal from common Sight; but all theſe things are ſignified by figurative and transferr'd Senſes, of Words, that literally have a Sound perfectly inoffenſive. And not He only, but the Heathen Oratour, hath expoſed the humourſome Courſeneſs of ſome Philoſophers,

M. im ubi ſupr.

losophers, who took upon them to vindicate the promiscuous use of all Words, and confined Turpitude and Indecency to Things and Actions only. He represents them, in this regard, as contrary to Nature, Neglecters and Affronters of the civilized part of Mankind, Scoffers at Distinctions, which are of infinite use to preserve Modesty and Decency, in the World; and not to be overturned by a Sophism so weak, as that of nothing being unfit for one to relate, that is not unfit to do. Since the unfitness of some Actions depends upon the Manner, not the Fact; and that, which privacy acquits from Blame, the publication of may be exceeding blameable. A Notion, not possible to have obtained so universally, if it had not been founded in Nature, and the obvious reason of Things. Which, in respect to our Pre-eminence above Brutes, and because our Excellence consists in the Operations of the Rational Mind, hath led us to consult the Dignity of our *Species*, by industriously concealing those Pleasures and Appetites, common to Us with Them: and therefore Matter of Shame, to Creatures who have, tho' none to such who have not, Faculties, and Enjoyments, nobler than Those of Sense. This were good Reasoning, if the Matter needed it: But indeed the Blushes, provoked upon such Occasions, infer a natural Aversion, prevent our arguing upon the Point, and seem to confess, that some Violence must be committed upon our Original Constitution, before a Man can either allow such Licentiousness in his own Discourse, or endure it in Another's.

Cic. Lib. 1. De Offic.

And, Can there be a greater Reproach upon us, than, that We should not discern, by the brightest Revelation, what a Heathen did, by the mere light of Reason? That He should judge so nicely the Decorum proper for the Character of a Man, and We so little regard what becomes that of a Christian? Surely

ly our Precepts of the ſtricteſt Chaſtity, which oblige even to purity of Thought; Our Example of a Maſter and Saviour, who, though he diſdained not to take our Fleſh, yet took it not after the ordinary manner; Our Diſcoveries of a future and immortal State, where even the moſt innocent Appetites of this kind ſhall ceaſe; ought to convince the Subjects to ſuch Laws, the Servants of ſuch a Lord, and the Heirs of ſuch an Eternity, that the ſtricteſt Rules of Modeſty ſhould be their Meaſure; And, that Their Words and Actions ſhould all carry ſuch an Air of Innocence and Gravity, as may not only keep them from giving Offence, but procure to Them, and their Profeſſion, Reſpect and Veneration from all, with whom they converſe.

The Force of what hath been ſaid upon this Subject, I ſuppoſe will without great difficulty be allowed me, by all Perſons of Morality and tolerable Underſtanding, ſo far as thoſe two Words *Filthineſs* and *Fooliſh talking* are concerned; which may ſeem to denote ſuch courſe Ribaldry, and barefac'd Lewdneſs, as few are capable of hearing patiently. But for the *Third* of *Jeſting*, there may be ſome Doubt. The rather, becauſe This is ſo requiſite, to εὐτραπελία. ſeaſon our Converſation with Mirth; A Facetiouſneſs placed by the Philoſopher in the rank of Virtues; as a commendable *Medium*, between Moroſeneſs and Ruſticity in one Extreme, and Inſipid or Ill-manner'd Scurrility and Abuſiveneſs in the Other. For clearing this Objection Two things ſhould be obſerv'd, The One, relating to the more reſtrained, the Other to the more extenſive and general, Senſe of the Word.

1. Now, *Firſt*, the Word, I take it, in the Paſſage we are upon, carries a particular and reſtrained Senſe, ſuch, as the Company, we find it in, ſufficiently determines. And thus it makes no difference from

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the former, as to the Substance of the Things spoken, but purely as to the Manner of speaking them. And then, I think it very evident, that This is at least as much to be declined, as either of the Other. At least, I say: For our Discourse is Criminal, not according to the Sound Words strike upon the Ear, but according to the Images they awaken in our Minds. And therefore, when the Matter and Design is Obscene, the more artful the Disguise is, the more mischief it does. It insinuates Lasciviousness with more Confidence and Security, fixes upon the Memory by the Uncommonness of its Wit, engages the Fancy by being dress'd up cleaner in Ambiguities, and puts us off our Guard, by ceasing to give manifest Offence. The Harm then is greater, and the Corruption more successful, when the Poison is gilded over: And much better it is, that those things could not be spoken without displeasing us, which hurt not when they do not please, and are in truth not fit ever to be spoken at all.

2. But, *Secondly*, Take this Word *Jesting* in its general Importance, and thus it may be, and often is so order'd, as to be by no means unlawful, or any way unbecoming a Christian. For Religion does not change us from being Men; We have still the same natural Weaknesses, are still as unable to bear continual Labour, either of Mind or Body. And therefore we have still the same need to unbend the one, and recreate the other. And, What Method so effectual, what Pleasure so truly Manly, can we take on these Occasions, as the harmless Mirth of an ingenious Conversation, and the Salt of a facetious Wit, to refresh and quicken us? To suppose Men oblig'd always to be upon the Serious and Dismal, were to charge Christianity with the hardship of bereaving them of one of the most valuable Comforts of Life. To admit laughter ones self, or to provoke it in our Brethren, is not

below

below the Character of the Graveſt. And Men may very innocently be as facetious as they pleaſe, provided the Subject they chooſe be fit, the Deſign harmleſs, the Time ſeaſonable, the Meaſure moderate; that they remember Jeſting may be good Diverſion, but cannot be good Buſineſs; and that nothing is truly Wit, or ought to pleaſe, which would entertain us, to the prejudice of God, or our Neighbour, Religion or Juſtice, Modeſty or Good-Manners.

I have now done with This part of my Diſcourſe, after entreating my Reader, ſeriouſly to conſider the Matter of it, to beware, that in theſe Reſpects he offend not with his Tongue, and earneſtly to implore the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, for avoiding the horrible Guilt of cheriſhing in himſelf, or raiſing in others, ſuch Ideas and Deſires, as require our utmoſt care to ſubdue and lay them to ſleep: and for adorning the Doctrine of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by ſuch communication as may miniſter Profit to the Hearers. To which End, *Let it pleaſe thee, O Lord, to ſet a Watch before* all *our mouths, and keep the door of our Lips.*

II. The Other Head, I propoſed to treat of, is That Duty, enjoyned by the Apoſtle at the 11th Verſe, *Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* By *having no fellowſhip* with ſuch Works, I preſume a great deal more to be meant, than not living in the Habit, or under the Power of them, nay, or even than not complying with the Temptations to, and not committing them in our own Perſons. Something, which may declare our diſlike, and abhorrence of them, and probably all, that the following particulars contain.

1. The keeping aloof off from, and, as much as the Condition of our Affairs will permit, ſhunning the Converſation, and intimate Acquaintance of, ſcandalouſly wicked Men. This indeed, conſidering how quick the Infection ſpreads, is adviſeable for the ſe-

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Gospel for the 3d Sunday after Epiphany.

curity of our own Virtue. And in that regard it hath been urged heretofore. The End I now mention it for, is the discountenancing of Vice, shaming Men into better Manners, and making them sensible, that the giving open Scandal, by a profligate Life, is an Injury and Affront to good Men, which every one is concerned to resent. We do not by any means answer the intent of outward Respects, and particular Endearments, if we do not make them distinctions of Virtue and Vice; nor sufficiently arm our Brethren against the malignant influence of a Bad Example, except we let Them see our Value for One, and our Aversion to the Other; by the choice of our Friendships, and the delights of our Intimacies being confined to Good Men: and by never entring into the like close Amities, with Bad Men, farther than Relation, or Gratitude, or some temporal warrantable Consideration induce us; or with a prospect of doing such Persons Service, in order to their Amendment. None of which, rightly understood, break in upon this Rule. For the Rest are Acts of Necessity, not Choice: The Last indeed is chosen, but chosen as an Act of Charity and Duty.

2. Therefore another Instance of *having* no *fellowship with works of Darkness*, is, When the Persons of Ill-Men cannot, or ought not to be declined, yet that we then be sure to order Matters so, that it may plainly appear, their Wickedness hath no part of our Favour and Approbation, and that They themselves, if this were removed, would be yet more dear and valuable in our esteem, Complacency in other People's Faults is always a Crime, And in some it may happen to draw a greater Guilt, upon the Delighter in, than upon the Commiter of, them. As, to instance in the Subject we have just been considering, Sins of Uncleanness are the Effect of natural Propensions,

sions, and very strong Passions. The stronger guard, 'tis sure, we are bound to set against them: but still here may be the Suddenness, or the Violence, of a Temptation, though not resisted as it should have been. But now, when a Person entertains Others with his Lewdness, and when those others think themselves entertained by it; This is all done in cold Blood, This argues a wretched depravation of the Will, a Man more lost to Modesty and Chastity, and a more habitual Impurity, than a single Act of a higher Degree. And it seems very reasonable to believe, that many Sinners, in common account more infamous, shall find it much more tolerable, at the Day of Judgment, than those obscene and filthy Wretches, whose Tongues and Ears are defiled, if their Bodies be not: But, who are not therefore one whit the less impure, because, did they abstain upon a Principle, (call it Religion, Honour, What you will) the same is of equal force to breed a disgust to all open breaches upon Decency and Modesty. That they proceed no farther, may be from fear of Shame, or Disease, or the like: And for this Restraint they have their Reward. But that they go so far, is a plain Evidence of a Conscience greatly misinformed, or greatly defiled. For the delighting in anothers Sin is so far from rendring it none to us; that St. *Paul* puts this last, as the highest aggravation of the Heathen World's Abominations, *Who, knowing the judgment of God, (that they who commit such things are worthy of death) not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.* Rom. i. 32.

Mean while this Dislike of other People's Wickedness, though common to all who are truly good, must be content with such Expressions, and outward Indications, as are proper and practibable. Where Circumstances will bear it, Reproof, Friendly Admonition, or Authoritative Rebukes, are highly expedient;

pedient. Where they will not, we muſt have recourſe to a forbidding Look, a ſilence marking Sorrow or Diſpleaſure, withdrawing from the Company, or ſome ſuch Teſtimony of being ill at eaſe, as a Wiſe and Good Man will find always at hand, and chooſe, as a Pious but diſcreet Zeal ſhall direct.

3. But *Thirdly*, There is one ſort of Reproof, which no conjuncture of Circumſtances can put out of our power, and it ſeems to have been That, which this Apoſtle had chiefly in view, The diſclaiming *all Fellowſhip with Works of Darkneſs*, by the Light of a good Example. For, it is here, as with thoſe Metaphors made uſe of to denote them, that a Bad Example is never ſo effectually expoſed, nor the Deformity and Odiouſneſs of it ſo manifeſtly detected, as when ſet in oppoſition to, and illuſtrated by a Good one. And this Reproof, as it is a Duty indiſpenſable in the Perſon giving, ſo is it unexceptionable, and can create no Reſentment, in the Perſons on whom it falls. The leſs, becauſe it is not particularly directed to This or That Man, but general, and intended for all that need it. The leſs ſtill, becauſe impoſſible to proceed from Envy, or Malice, or Peeviſhneſs, and a deſire to find fault; as other Reproofs may, often do, and, when they do not, are at leaſt accuſed of doing ſo, the better to elude the force, and defeat the intended effect of them. But This is not only a Rebuke, but a Guide, and an Encouragement, to all that obſerve it. It ſhews them the way, goes before them in it, proves the poſſibility of Obedience, and beats Men off from all thoſe fond Pretences, of Duties difficult or impracticable, from whence they ſeek Protection for their Hypocriſy, or their Sloth. It proves the Perſons Sincerity, and thus recommends him to Imitation; and, where there is an opportunity for arguing, it perſwades and convinces, above all the Rhetorick in the World. That can but de-

ſcribe, and help the Imagination to ſome abſtracted Ideas of Virtue; This ſhews *the Life*, and, by reducing thoſe Ideas into Practice, appeals to Senſe, and Obſervation, and Experience, for the Excellence, the Beauty, the Uſefulneſs, and upon all Accounts the Lovelineſs, of Religion.

4. Particularly in the *Fourth* place, as the moſt undeniable Evidence, that the Good Man *hath no fellowſhip with the works of darkneſs*, he will think himſelf concerned to abſtain very carefully, not only from every thing that is poſitively and directly ſinful, but from all appearances of, and approaches to, Evil. The want of this Caution ruines multitudes of unwary Souls. Who make indeed a Conſcience of breaking a plain and peremptory Law, but, as if they were under the Government of ſome Arbitrary and Tyrannical Lord, appear upon all occaſions extreamly nice, and jealous of their Liberty, and ſeem to be more ſollicitous for nothing, than to prevent Encroachments. Hence we find ſo many diſmal Conſequences, whoſe firſt beginning owed it ſelf to the abuſe of things in themſelves indifferent. Hence St. *Chryſoſtom*, with equal Piety and Wiſdom, from thoſe words in the 4th. of this Epiſtle, *Let no corrupt Communication come out of your mouth, but that which is good to the uſe of edifying*, &c. expoſtulates thus: "That Evil "is very great, which is reputed none at all. For "what we count no Evils we are apt to overlook; "When thus deſpiſed, they quickly grow upon us; "and ſo continue growing, till they become incura-"ble. And again, upon this Chapter, This is the "Artifice of the Devil, to perſwade Men to diſregard "things indifferent; For even ſuch ought not to be "deſpiſed, ſince we know, that from this very cauſe "many enormous and great Evils have grown; and "from Fooliſh Talking Men riſe to Fornication and "Adultery, &c. In ſhort, it ſhews a Mind but ill diſpoſed, when a Man is curious and inquiſitive, a-

bout the bounds of Chriſtian Liberty, and, upon every occaſion, for going to the very end of his Line. A Courſe exceeding hazardous, and ſuch as gives the Tempter great Advantage. Who, when we are perpetually upon the Confines, eaſily gains opportunities of luring us into his own Territories, and of deceiving us by the ſhortneſs of the diſtance. This at leaſt ſhews a ſecret Affection for Evil; and the very deliberating to a nicety, how far we may venture, is faulty; Becauſe it argues our Wiſhes at leaſt, that we might ſtill go farther. The truly Pious Man, on the other hand, finds no occaſion for Scruples of this kind, He reſolves to be ſafe, and to go upon ſure grounds, He never tampers with his Conſcience, nor runs the riſque of a Diſputable Caſe. Where Duties are commanded in the general, without a meaſure ſet, he chooſes rather to exceed, than to ſtop ſhort: As in the frequency of Prayer, the Quantity of his Alms, and the like. And where Refreſhments, or Recreations, or Pleaſures, (or any other thing, which is the proper Object of Temperance and Prudence) are allowed, but the Circumſtances and Degrees left to his own Diſcretion; he always takes leſs than he might juſtify. This plainly ſhews the Man devoted to God and his Duty. This acquits him from any *fellowſhip with the works of Darkneſs*, which the Doubting, and the nice Ballancers of Chriſtian Liberty, cannot be cleared of: Becauſe, were there not a ſenſual and ſelfiſh Principle at bottom, that would fain compound the matter between *God* and *Mammon*, Religion and Appetite, Darkneſs and Light; ſuch Evaſions and Diſtinctions had never been heard of; as were invented, and are applied, ('tis to be feared) not to teach Men, how Much they ſhould do, but how Little would ſerve the turn; not how affectionately they ſhould love God, but how well they may love Pleaſure with Impunity. In a word, an Honeſt Heart is the beſt Caſuiſt, and will preſerve us from Danger and Diſquiet

quiet better than all the Schoolmen, and critical Distinguishers in the World. Those may help to resolve a Doubt, but this will not venture, where there is a Doubt; and it is Wisdom, as great as all Their Volumes contain, not to come in the way of needing any of them.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

The GOSPEL.

St. *Luke*. xi. 14.

14. *JESUS was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondred.*

15. *But some of them said, He casteth out devils, through Beelzebub, the chief of the Devils.*

PARAPHRASE.

16. *And other tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.*

16. Others distrusting these Evidences of his *Messiahship*, required him to shew some Sign from Heaven, alluding possibly to the Prophecy of *Daniel* vii. 13. To these he replies, *ver.* 29. To the former Objection he answers here. (The whole whereof being explained particularly in the Comment, I forbear any farther Paraphrase.)

17. *But he knowing their thoughts, said unto them, every kingdom divided against it self is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.*

18. *If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say, that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.*

19. *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your Sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.*

20. *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

21. *When a strong-man armed keepeth his palace his goods are in peace.*

22. *But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted and divideth his Spoils.*

23. *He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.*

24. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places, seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.*

25. *And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.*

26. *Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*

27. *And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.*

28. *But he said, yea rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.*

COMMENT.

OF what unhappy Power private Intereſts and Prejudices are, in Matters of Religion, and how great a bar they put to Mens coming to the knowledge and belief of the Truth, we cannot have a clearer Proof, than from the Inſtance ſet before us, in the Portion of Scripture appointed to be read this day. Jeſus is there ſaid to have diſpoſſeſs'd a dumb Spirit; and the Operation was ſo amazing and ſo effectual, that the Devil immediately quitted his hold, the Tongue that he had tied up before was preſently looſed, *the dumb ſpake, and the people wondred.*

This Wonder indeed was the natural conſequence of ſo ſudden and mighty a Cure. For the Diſeaſes of this kind were always looked upon with Horror and Deſpair, and acknowledged to exceed all the force of common Remedies, and Human Helps. And when they ſaw a Recovery perfected without any tedious Methods of Application, only by virtue of one commanding Word; A Word too abſolute for the Strength of Hell to withſtand; This would neceſſarily carry them to admire, not only the thing, but the Perſon too, by whom it was done.

Of this the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were well aware, who had degenerated ſo far into Ambition and Covetouſneſs, as now to uſe their Authority over the People, no longer for Their Benefit, but their Own. The Advantage they ſuck'd from their falling to them was no ſmall one: And, provided this could but be continued and ſecured, it was no great concern to Them, what became of the Conſciences under their direction. The Reputation of our Saviour's Miracles preſs'd them hard, and great danger there was, that the Multitude ſhould be drawn off, and join themſelves to this new Maſter, of whoſe Commiſſion they beheld ſo many, and ſuch convincing Teſtimonies every day. Some Stratagem then was neceſſary, to check this growing Prophet,

and ruine him in the Esteem of the People; for things were now brought to that desperate push, that both their Credits could not stand together. What then was to be done in this Case? For, *that indeed a notable Miracle* had at this very time *been wrought by him, was manifest to all them that were present, and they could not deny it*, The Powers of Nature were evidently outdone, and somewhere else they must lay it. But, if they could insinuate, that there was a Secret in all this, which, tho' the credulous and easy Vulgar could not discover, yet themselves, who were wiser, and examined things more nicely, saw more clearly into, That might prevail with Men to proceed more warily, and at least to suspend their Belief for some time.

To this purpose they agree with the Crowd in the Confession of a supernatural and invisible Power, concerned in these Matters, but, at the same time craftily warn them not to be too rash, and easily impos'd upon. For, that the Devil, who is the Great Deceiver of Mankind, might very probably play booty; and enable our Lord to cast out Devils, only the more effectually to ensnare and betray Men. Thus they hardned themselves, and their hearers, by a most obstinate and perverse Calumny, by attributing what they could not deny to be above the Power of Nature and Art, to the Concurrence of the Devil. Rather chosing to make it pass for the Work of Hell, so to countenance their own wicked Infidelity, and to discourage the Belief of Others; than to confess the Spirit of God, even where his Power and Goodness appeared most eminently visible, and, where nothing could have hindred them from seeing it, but a settled Resolution, not to see, and not to be perswaded.

Upon Men so violently bent against the Truth, there was little hope of any Good to be done. But however, when so malicious and black an Aspersion was cast upon our Saviour, it was necessary to refute it. This was a Right, he owed to himself, and to the Divine Spirit,

by which he wrought; And it was an Act of Compaſſion, due to thoſe better meaning People, whoſe Eaſineſs might have been poſſeſſed by that impudent Cavil of their Spiritual Guides. Upon theſe Accounts our Lord condeſcends to reaſon the Caſe with them; and, by *four* moſt undeniable Arguments, ſhews, that what they objected, could never be; That it was impoſſible, any Man of common Senſe, or even They themſelves ſhould imagine it true. And, becauſe theſe Arguments make up the greateſt part of this Goſpel, I will juſt touch them lightly, that you may read and hear what the Church hath recommended to your Meditation, with a better Underſtanding; and diſcern the Abſurdity of calling into queſtion the Divinity of our Saviour's Miracles. Which is indeed ſo very material a Point, that the greateſt Evidence of the Chriſtian Religion ſtands upon this Bottom; And, if thoſe Miracles could be proved either Falſe, or Diabolical, the very Foundations would be torn up, and we ſhould never be able to ſupport our Cauſe without them.

The *Firſt* of thoſe Arguments proceeds upon common Experience, and the known Miſchiefs and Diſorders, that follow upon Diviſions. That, all Societies, the leſs, as well as the greater, owe their Subſiſtence and Preſervation to Amity and Concord, and can never maintain themſelves, except by an united Strength. Whenever therefore any thing happens to break and divide them, Deſtruction preſently follows. And of this the Devil is ſo ſenſible, that he makes it his buſineſs perpetually to ſow the Seeds of Diſcord and Diſcontent, Animoſities and Jealouſies among Men. He knows, that this is to play Parties againſt one Another, And, that the End of it will be the daſhing, and breaking One Another to pieces. But He, who ſo well underſtands the Conſequence of ſuch ſeparated Intereſts in Other Caſes, and uſes them with ſo much Artifice to our Ruine; cannot be ſuppoſed, to be ſo far forſaken of all Policy and common Prudence, as to employ this dangerous

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Weapon againſt himſelf. Nor can the Nature of the thing be ſo changed, as to produce a quite contrary Effect in the Kingdom of Darkneſs, from what it does in all other States; Nay, even in private Families, where the Difference might ſeem more eaſy to be compoſed, or overpowered; And therefore, ſince we ſee daily, that *every Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf is brought to deſtruction, and that a houſe divided againſt a houſe falleth*; it were moſt abſurd to ſuppoſe, that our Saviour ſhould caſt out Devils through *Beelzebub*. Becauſe, at this rate, *Satan would be divided againſt himſelf*; and the Effect of this would be, that his *Kingdom could no longer ſtand*. This is the Importance of what we find urged at the 17th. and 18th. Verſes of this Chapter.

The *Two* following Verſes proceed to a ſecond Argument, in which the Perſons of theſe Objectors themſelves were more immediately concerned. It was a very common thing among the *Jews*, to make uſe of the Name of *the God of Abraham* in Exorciſms. And tho' they made this the Occaſion of a great many Superſtitious Practices, yet God was pleaſed many times to give Succeſs to ſuch Solemn Invocations of his Name. And ſo, by the preſence of his Power, to ſignalize, and diſtinguiſh his own People, that worſhipped the one true God only, from the reſt of the World, that ſtill continued in Ignorance and Idolatry. Now theſe Operations of a Divine Spirit the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were very fond and proud of, becauſe they thought a great deal of Honour devolved upon their Religion from hence, and conſequently upon themſelves, who were the very Oracles and Teachers of it to the People. And upon this Account, our Saviour mentions the Spirits, that were frequently diſpoſſeſs'd by their own Diſciples; to ſhow their moſt unreaſonable Malice againſt himſelf, and the Wickedneſs of that Partiality they were tranſported with, who aſcribed the very ſame Operations to the Devil, when done by Chriſt; which they freely acknowledged to be the wonderful Work of God, and

boasted of, and valued themselves upon them as such, when their own Proselytes and Children were made the Instruments and Ministers of them. If therefore the Fruit be the same in both cases, it is manifest, that the Tree producing it must be the same too. And, if that be owned, and admired for a good Tree in one case; Nothing but Frowardness, and Envy, and the incorrigible Obstinacy of the very Devil himself, can call it a *Thorn* or a *Thistle*, when the *Grapes* and the *Figs* gathered from it are still the same. If then I by *Beelzebub cast out Devils, by whom (says he) do your Sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your Judges. But if I with the Finger of God cast out Devils, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you.*

Verse 19. 20.

Thirdly, The Devil is that Wolf, who cometh not, but to catch, and to tear, and to destroy. He seizeth upon Men as his Prey, and he is so greedy of that Prey, as never to let it go again, till they be forced out of his Hands. So that, whenever any wicked Spirit is dispossess'd; This comes to pass, not for want of employing any Subtilty or Strength that he hath; but from having his Force overpowered, and his Cunning defeated, by a Being wiser and mightier than himself. And such a Being is none but God only. So that, wherever dumb and deaf Spirits are cast out, this is an undeniable Evidence of a Superior, that is of a Divine, Power. All which our Lord hath very elegantly argued, at the *one* and *two* and *twentieth* Verses, under the Similitude of a Man standing upon his own defence, and guarding the Wealth under his Custody. *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his Goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his Spoils.*

Lastly, Since to People of such perverse Dispositions, nothing, though never so Improbable in it self, will seem unfit to be objected; If any of them should yet entertain an Imagination so extravagant and wild,

as

as that This might ſtill be done by ſome Colluſion and private Conſent; And that, how oppoſite ſoever our Saviour's Miracles might appear to the World, yet there was underhand a very good Agreement between Him and this Prince of Darkneſs, and ſecretly they underſtood one another well enough: Therefore to all the reſt, he adds a *Fourth* Argument, containing the direct Contrariety of their Ends, and Intereſts, and the utter Impoſſibility of ever reconciling them. Where Men combine together to impoſe upon the World, they only chooſe different Means, but unite together in the ſame Deſign. And this is, only as Robbers take ſeveral Roads for a Blind, but meet at laſt in one Place. But now, between *Chriſt and Beelzebub* there can be no ſuch Contrivance, or Accommodation. Their Ends, as well as the Methods that lead to them, are the moſt diſtinct that can be; the moſt deſtructive of one another, of any that ever were. Here is a rooted and fix'd Enmity. The One cannot be ſafe, except in the ruin of the Other; And the Quarrel is ſo high, that every body muſt be in one of the Parties. No Favour, no Countenancing of the One, nay no Indifference or Neutrality is poſſible, and conſiſtent with Friendſhip to the Other; ſo ſays the 23d Verſe expreſly. He *that is not with me is againſt me, and he that gathereth not with me ſcattereth.*

To theſe Reaſons, in his own Vindication, our Lord ſubjoins a Parabolical Deſcription of the woful Eſtate of theſe Impenitent *Jews*, who were but the worſe for all the Means of Grace vouchſafed them; and made no other uſe of the Miracles and Doctrine of our Saviour, than to add proportionably to their own Miſery and Condemnation. While the Devil was driven out of Others, he got faſter and ſtronger hold of Them; and therefore, as their Sin and Obſtinacy was greater now than ever: So the Calamity and Miſchief conſequent to it would be more diſmal and dreadful, than any that had ever befallen that Nation before. As the

Leproſy

Leprosy of *Naaman* clave to *Gehazi*, so these wicked Spirits, as soon as they were dislodged in one place, betook themselves to another. The Pharisees Hearts were a convenient retreat for them, and here they found all things to their Wish, as if they had been prepared, and put into that posture, on purpose to entertain them. These Arguments of our Blessed Saviour were so full, and so convincing; and the Judgment he passed upon those obstinate Wretches, so just and so moving, that, though we are not told of any great Impression upon their Hearts; yet one of the standers by, who heard them without prejudice, and considered the weight and power of what had been said, felt her self so lively affected with it, as immediately to cry out with Rapture and Admiration, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.*

This is a Natural way of extolling any ones Excellency, by proclaiming the Happiness of their Parents. For Parents know no greater Felicity, that Heaven can give in this World, than wise and vertuous Children. And sure no Instance of this kind was ever comparable to that of the Mother of our Lord. *All Generations* might well *call Her Blessed*, who was honoured with a Birth so wonderful, so much above the rate of common Mothers. What Praise, what Admiration, what Reverence, that is fit to be given to the most Excellent of Creatures, can be thought in reason too much for Her, whom an Angel was sent to, to acquaint her with such a Conception, as Nature never did, or can know; for Her, who was impregnated with the pure, the incorruptible, the Almighty Operation of a Divine Spirit; for Her, whose *Womb* God himself *did not abhor*: The Best and most deservedly Conspicuous among the Sons of Men have yet this Allay, that they are born of polluted Principles, and formed of perishing and corruptible Matter; such as is subject to a world of Weakness and Frailty, and must, in a little while, fall back again into that Dust,

from

from whence it was first taken. And yet, where we see a great and generous Mind, that struggles bravely with the World, and distinguishes it self from the rest of Mankind, and gets above the common Vices and Temptations of Human Nature; We cannot forbear admiring it; We overlook that Allay of Infirmity, with which even the best of Mortals are debased, and envy that Honour, which such Persons reflect back upon their Ancestors. So acknowledged a Truth, and so natural a one it is, that a *Wise Son is the Glory of his Father, and the just Joy and Pride of her that bare him.* So effectually does the Comfort of Good Children turn Sorrow into Triumph, and make a happy Mother not only forget, but even bless and rejoice in that Travail and Pain, which is all well recompensed with true Knowledge and exemplary Goodness. And the Honour of bringing into the World a Useful and Excellent Person, and of being instrumental in adding to the number of glorified Saints, is a Joy which all acknowledge; but Parents only can know, and feel the real Charms, and sweet Complacencies of it.

But alas! What is all this, in comparison of the Virgin's Happiness? For She alone had this incommunicable Privilege, of having a Son of perfect and unblemish'd Virtue, a Son of untainted and Immortal Nature, One absolutely above the reach of Death and Hell; One, who died, only that he might conquer Death, and lead into Captivity that Tyrant of Darkness; One, over whose Body Worms and Putrefaction had no power. She lived to see the Flesh he took of Her, burst asunder the Bands and brazen Bars of the Grave; She beheld him rise in Triumph, and saw her own Substance exalted to the Right Hand of the Throne of God, deck'd with Light as with a Garment, and cloathed with Incomprehensible Majesty and Honour. And therefore *Blessed* indeed was the *Womb that bare* this Wonderful, this Divine Child, yea blessed for ever, and, in that respect, blessed above all Women, shall this Mother be.

But yet, when we have said all we can or all we may

upon

upon this Occasion; still St. *Augustine*'s Remark will hold good, that this *nearness of Relation to Christ had done Mary no Service, if she had not born him in her Heart to better purpose, than she did in her Body. And therefore her Blessedness is more owing to her receiving the Faith of Christ in her Heart, than it was to the conceiving his Flesh, as her Son.* If then we would be Happy, our Lord hath shew'd us a more effectual, and a more excellent way; He denies not the Blessedness, which the Zeal of this Woman pronounces; But, allowing That to be as great, as it was possible for Her to imagine it, yet, if compared with that of Obedience to God's Commands, he informs us, that even This was but little and low. For the Reply he made, extenuates the One, when put into the Ballance with the Other, *He said, Yea, rather blessed are they, that hear the word of God and keep it.*

By hearing the Word of God, no doubt, is meant, all that Reverence and Attention of Mind, all that Teachable Temper and Good Disposition of the Will, which prepares and enclines Men to receive it effectually. And, by *keeping* this Word, the continuing in what we have heard, and making it the Rule and Standard of all our Conversation. The believing all those mysterious Truths, and the observing and profiting under those most Holy Precepts, which our Saviour hath taught us in his Gospel. And this our Saviour declares to be a Happy State indeed; A Privilege, above any the Prerogatives of this present World, in which one Man excels another. For sure, if any Temporal Advantage might stand in Competition with This, that of being honoured with the Conception and Birth of the Son of God, must needs have been it. No Honour, no Greatness can ever be so singular, so miraculous, so immortal, and therefore none so desirable, as This. And yet even This is outdone by that Spiritual Regeneration, whereby Christ is conceived in our Hearts, and born and brought to Light, in the Pious, and Just, and Charitable Actions of a Holy Life.

The neceſſary Time that I have ſpent in explaining the foregoing parts of this Paſſage, hath not left me at liberty to enlarge upon this Subject, as otherwiſe I might have done, Nor is it very material that I ſhould. For Two or Three plain Arguments will ſuffice, to perſwade us of this Truth. And, if we will but attend duly to Theſe, it will quickly appear, that our Saviour hath calculated things very juſtly, and paſs'd a true Eſtimate upon both thoſe Bleſſednesſes, when he does not diſown the Greatneſs of the One, and yet gives ſo manifeſt a Preference to the Other. For,

Firſt, Every Happineſs is the more valuable, as it is capable of being made more General. The valuing our ſelves upon having ſomewhat, which Others have not, argues a great defect in that very thing we have; and, that, what we eſteem good, is not ſo, except in Opinion and Compariſon only. This is the Caſe of Riches, and Honours, and the Reſt of our Worldly Advantages, which would ceaſe to be remarkable, and ſink very low in our Eſteem; if all Mankind were partakers of them in the ſame Degree with our ſelves. And this ſhews, that there can be nothing, or very little, of true Excellence, in that Object, which recommends it ſelf, not ſo much from our own Plenty, as from Other Peoples Penury and Want. For, whatever is real Happineſs, hath a ſort of Sufficiency in it ſelf; and cannot depend upon ſuch mean and ill-natur'd Conſiderations, as the Defects, or the Misfortunes of our Brethren. Theſe are proper Subjects for our Pity and Compaſſion, but cannot be warrantable grounds of Pride and Triumph to any truly Good Man. Now the being the Mother of our Bleſſed Saviour, is what all One Sex are abſolutely debarr'd from, and what all of the Other Sex but One, are utterly incapable of too. And it would argue God a very ſtrange, and partial, nay a very Cruel Being, if he ſhould have created ſo many Millions of Men and Women, and yet have provided ſo ſlenderly for them, that Only One Perſon, among that infinite number, ſhould

be

be able to attain the greateſt Honour and Happineſs, that Human Nature could ever aſpire to. But Virtue and Religious Wiſdom lye open and in common to all. Every Man, with the ordinary Aſſiſtances of Grace, and his own faithful Endeavours, may get this Bleſſing into his poſſeſſion. And no Man is the leſs Wiſe, or the leſs Holy, for Anothers being ſo; but finds an Addition to his own Happineſs, and a ſenſible Joy, in that of Others. The more diffuſive this is, the greater it is; And, if it were Univerſal, it would be greater ſtill. Which ſhews, that this Happineſs is rooted in the nature of the thing, not precarious and depending upon Fancy and meer Notion; that this is an Extenſive Good, fit for a Bountiful God to propoſe, and worthy of Reaſonable Man to purſue.

Secondly. No other happineſs is properly Our Own. We neither give, nor can continue any thing elſe to our ſelves; but This is ſtrictly Ours, and a Joy that no Man taketh from us. The Virtue of a Child, or of a Parent, is Ours only by Reflection; and That but a very weak and diſtant one too. The Praiſe of it is not due to our Selves, but to Him; And they are His Excellencies, not Ours, that we pleaſe our ſelves with. The Image indeed comes back to us, and we take a pleaſing view of it, as of our Faces in a Glaſs; But neither the Light, nor the Subſtance, that makes the Image, are in the Glaſs it ſelf. This is only the Inſtrument of Reflecting it back again, and contributes nothing to the Beauty of the Face. Thus all, that we can pretend to, is, that Providence hath been kind in making us ſome way Inſtrumental, towards the ſhewing ſuch Goodneſs to the World. But ſtill we muſt remember, that this Goodneſs is not Ours, but Anothers. The Enjoyments of the preſent Life are the Gifts of Fortune; And when we have them, they lye at the Mercy of every capricious Turn of Fortune to ſnatch them from us again. We did not beſtow them upon our ſelves, and we cannot preſerve them one

Moment,

Moment, but by the permiſſion of the Donor; But Virtue and Religion are properly Ours. Theſe are not our Fate but our Choice, the Work of our own Minds, and the Treaſures of our own getting. No Circumſtances, tho' never ſo fortunate, can put them into our Poſſeſſion; none tho' never ſo miſerable, have the Power to deprive us of them. We need only be kind to our ſelves, and we ſhall certainly have them; And we muſt conſpire againſt our ſelves, if ever we loſe them. And ſure that Happineſs deſerves to be valued above All others, which is left at our own diſpoſal; ſo eaſie to be attained, that nothing can hinder or diſappoint Us in the purſuit; and ſo durable and certain, that nothing can impoveriſh us, or cut off our enjoyment of it.

Thirdly and *Laſtly*. The *hearing and keeping* of *God's Word* muſt needs be the greateſt Bleſſedneſs, becauſe This, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, *hath the promiſes both of this Life, and that which is to come.* As well may we expect Brightneſs without Light, or Heat without Fire, as Felicity without Virtue; It is not in the Nature of the Thing, it is not in the wiſe Ordinance and Appointment of God. In the preſent Life, *he that heareth Chriſt's ſayings, and doth them, is called the houſe built upon a Rock.* Becauſe This is the only thing, that can keep him from being the Sport of Fortune, and ſecure his Happineſs againſt all the ſpight and uncertainty of a dangerous and unſtable World. The Winds may blow, and the Waves beat and roar, but they only break themſelves; and will never be able to move, or waſh him off from his firm Foundation. And, for the next World, all our hopes turn upon this, and ſuch like gracious Declarations, *He that hear-eth my word and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall never come into Condemnation, but is paſſed from death unto Life.* That the bleſſed Virgin is honourable among the Saints above, the Chriſtian

1 Tim. iv. 8.

Mat. vii. 24, 25.

John v. 24.

ſtian Church hath always thought it reaſonable to believe. But the cauſe of all this Honour, by all who have thought wiſely of the matter, is not imputed to the bearing our Saviour, in which ſhe was purely paſſive; but in that Innocence and Piety, which was her own Act, and rendred her meet to be choſen for the Mother of God.

All I ſhall add, upon this Occaſion, is, A ſerious Exhortation, That Men would learn from hence, where their Happineſs lies, and purſue it accordingly. That they would conſider the Honours due to Virtue and Goodneſs, and ſecure theſe to themſelves. How ſhould we deſpiſe the mean and trifling Advantages of this preſent World, in compariſon of this only true and valuable one? Or, If we will ſtill be fond of Greatneſs, and Wealth, and places of Authority, let us not ſuffer our Eyes to be dazzled with a falſe and empty ſhew, but covet that, which is ſubſtantial Honour. And, where this is to be had the wiſe Son of *Sirach* hath inſtructed us, *Among Brethren he that is chief is honourable, ſo are they that fear the Lord, in his Eyes.*

Ec. x. 20, 22, 24. *Whether a man be rich, noble, or poor, their glory is the fear of the Lord. Great-men, and Judges, and Potentates, ſhall be honoured, yet is there none of them greater than he that feareth the Lord.* If we will ſtill admire a noble Deſcent, and value our ſelves upon great Families, and being Allied to Royal Blood; let us at leaſt improve this Vanity, by turning our Eyes another way, and take care to contract the cloſeſt Relation to the King of Kings. For the Lord of Lords, and the ſupreme Prince of Heaven and Earth hath ſaid it, that

Matt. xi. 50. *whoſoever does the will of his Father, the ſame is his Brother, and Siſter, and Mother.* O incomprehenſible Honour of Faith and Obedience! Oh Bleſſed Conſanguinity! to be born of God, and to bear and bring forth the Lord *Jeſus* in our Hearts. To expreſs his Image in every Thought, and Word, and Action; and, to be our ſelves conformed to him, partakers of his Holineſs, and his Crown. For the being thus his Brethren, and Children of God, is no empty Honour, no ſwelling ſounding Name, but gives a ſure Title to his Royalties and Poſſeſſions too. *For if Sons, then are we heirs,*

Rom. viii. 17. *heirs of God, and coheirs with Chriſt: Inheriters of a Kingdom, a Kingdom not like the periſhing ones,* that ſo dazle our Eyes here upon Earth, *but One unſpeakably happy, and full of Glory, that fadeth not away for ever in the Heavens.*

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

The COLLECT.

GRant we beſeech thee, Almighty God, that We, who for our evil deeds do worthily deſerve to be puniſhed, by the comfort of thy grace may mercifully be relieved, through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Galat. iv. 21.

PARAPHRASE.

21. *TELL me, ye that deſire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law?*

21. You that are ſo zealous for the Law, will do well at leaſt to attend to the Arguments, which even the Law furniſhes for the Point I am debating.

22. *For it is written that Abraham had two ſons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.*

23. *But he, who was of the bond-woman was born after the fleſh; but he of the free-woman was by promiſe.*

22, 23. Now there you find that *Abraham* had Two Sons, of Mothers of different Conditions; and the manner of his having them was different. For the Bond-woman's Son was, like common Children, the Effect of natural Vigour: But the Free-woman's Son was promiſed as an extraordinary Bleſſing, to Perſons naturally incapable of having any.

24. *Which things are an Allegory: For theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendreth to bondage, which is Agar.*

25. *For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*

24, 25. Now under this hiſtorical there is a myſtical meaning. For the Two Covenants are typified by theſe Two Mothers. The Law given in *Sinai*, a Place out of the Land of Promiſe, (fitly reſembled by *Agar*, as in the Language of that Country bearing the ſame Name) is ſignified by *Agar*, whoſe Children (as their Mother was) are Bond-ſervants: And thus it agrees with the preſent *Jeruſalem* on Earth, and the ſervile Condition of the Jews.

26. *But Jeruſalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.*

27. *For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that beareſt not; break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not, for the deſolate hath many more children, than ſhe which hath an Husband.*

26, 27. But the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, reſembled by *Sarah*, is free: From hence the other Covenant came, and this is the Mother of Chriſtians every where. The Numbers of whoſe Children *Iſaiah* foreſeeing, calls upon her, notwithſtanding her former Barrenneſs, to rejoice in a Family, larger than others that bore ſooner could boaſt of.

28. We therefore of the Chriſtian Church were figured by *Iſaac*, and owe our ſpiritual Birth to the Promiſe and Free Grace of God.

23. *Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe.*

29. Nor are the Jews wanting to carry on the Allegory; but reſemble the Diſpoſition and Behaviour of *Iſhmael* in vexing the Chriſtians, as he did *Iſaac*.

29. *But as then he that was born after the fleſh perſecuted him that was born after the ſpirit, even ſo it is now.*

30. And at the laſt Their Fate ſhall be his too, to be caſt out from that Inheritance they would arrogate to their own Works: While We, who depend on the Promiſe of God, and expect to be juſtified by the Evangelical Covenant, not the Legal, ſhall be the only Heirs.

30. *Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the Scripture? caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon; for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.*

31. You ſee then, how theſe things belong to us; and conſequently, how far we Chriſtians are from any Obligation to that Law of *Moſes*, which would deſtroy our free Condition, and diſparage the Title our Birth gives us.

31. *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.*

COMMENT.

THE principal Deſign of this Epiſtle to the *Galatians* was to root out ſome falſe Notions, infuſed into them by their new Teachers, concerning the Neceſſity of ſtill adhering to the Law of *Moſes*. In Confutation whereof, after having inſiſted on ſeveral Topicks, with regard to the Nature and proper Uſe of that Law, and the Conditions and Privileges of the Goſpel, as being far preferable to, and now inconſiſtent with the Obſervation of, it: He does, in this Portion of Scripture, propound one Argument more, drawn from the Writings of *Moſes* himſelf; And therefore ſuch, as ought to weigh with Them, whoſe intemperate and unſeaſonable Zeal for the Law, delivered by Him, proved them to hold His Authority in the higheſt Veneration.

The Streſs laid on this Argument is apparently ſo great, as to call for a more particular Explanation, than a Paraphraſe can be ſuppoſed to allow it. My preſent

Endea-

Endeavour ſhall therefore be, *Firſt*, To enlarge a little upon ſome of the moſt material Paſſages relating to this Matter, and *Then* to deduce ſome few Inferences, agreeable to the Subject.

1. Now the Apoſtle here, by grounding his Argument upon a Point of Hiſtory, ſeems plainly to imply, that, in ſome Facts related by *Moſes*, the Jews ought not to reſt in the Letter and Narration only: For that God intended the things then done, to be Figures of Others, which ſhould be done hereafter; and, under the Rehearſal of ſome memorable Events read there, couched a myſtical and very important Meaning. In ſome particularly, wherein *Abraham* was concerned, his Poſterity, both carnal and ſpiritual, had an Intereſt; and might be let in to the Reaſons and Manner of God's Proceedings with Them, by obſerving how he had dealt heretofore with Him, their renowned Father, and common Repreſentative.

2. To this purpoſe the Apoſtle takes notice of Two Sons born to that Patriarch, as Emblems of the Law and the Goſpel; And, by ſome Circumſtances relating to Them, applied to theſe Two Covenants, he forms his Reaſoning, and confutes the vain Pretences, of the Moſaical Inſtitution being ſtill obligatory, and the Goſpel Terms being, either inferior to it, or inſufficient for Salvation without it.

The Firſt of theſe Circumſtances is the different Condition of their reſpective Mothers; The One a Bond-woman, the Other a Free-woman: From whence follows the like Difference in their Children. For, ſince it was a known Maxim in Law, that the Children can have no Quality deſcending to them, but ſuch as the Parent had that bore them; and all that were born of Servants in the Family, the Maſter had, by ſuch Birth, the ſame Title to, and Dominion over, as he had to their Parents by Contract: It follows, that the Son of this Bond-woman muſt be no better than a Servant. On the

other hand, the Free-woman, being the Maſter's Wife, and Miſtreſs of the Family, Her Son muſt, in Conformity, be born in a State of Liberty; Such as gives him a Title to the Prerogatives of the Firſt-born, and the Inheritance of his Father's Fortunes, excluſive of all Sons, (though born before him in Time) begotten of any other Woman. The Bond-man born muſt be content with the Treatment, the Wages, the Proviſions ſutable to his Station; The Heir may depend upon all the Tenderneſs, the Affection, the liberal Education, the free Acceſs, the encouraging Proſpects and Reverſions, due to the Quality and Succeſſion he is born to.

3. Theſe Mothers, in the Application, the Apoſtle hath acquainted us, are the *Two Covenants*, that is, the Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. Their Children conſequently are the Perſons living under thoſe Covenants; The Bond-woman's, Thoſe under the Law; The Free-woman's, We under the Goſpel. How fitly ſo compared, will appear, by attending to the Characters given here of Each.

The Law is repreſented by *Agar*, a Mother of Servants only, this was given in Mount *Sinai* in *Arabia*, this anſwered to the *Jeruſalem* that then was, and this gendereth to Bondage.

Whether the Name of that Mountain (in the *Arabian* Language called *Hagar*) were any part of the Apoſtle's Meaning in this Alluſion or not: there is a great deal to juſtify it upon other Accounts. It is not without good Reaſon, that, after the *gendring to Bondage*, the Apoſtle takes particular notice, that *Sinai*, repreſented by ſuch a Mother, is a Mountain in *Arabia*. A Place inhabited by the Poſterity of *Agar*, but withal, a Place at ſome diſtance from the Land promiſed to *Abraham* and his Seed; and, by the very Situation of it, intimating, that the Law iſſued, and the Covenant ſtruck there, could not indent for the Bleſſings of the Heavenly *Canaan*. As a Bond-woman then could not produce Free-children and Heirs,

Heirs, who her ſelf was not free (in the literal Senſe of this Hiſtory) So neither (in the Myſtery and typical Senſe) could the Law, given without the Borders of *Canaan* have any Influence on, or convey a Title to, the Inheritance of Heaven; becauſe *Arabia*, in which that Law was given, was not, and *Canaan* alone was, the Figure and Type of Heaven.

Again, this *Agar* anſwers to *Jeruſalem*, that then was; and was in Bondage with her Children. The Deſcendants of *Hagar* in *Arabia* were then under the *Roman* Yoke; ſo were the *Jews* in *Judea*. The *Hagarens* too obſerved Circumciſion, as a federal Rite; ſo did the *Jews*. In both Reſpects the Reſemblance holds. And, if we chooſe to underſtand him in the Latter, no wonder the Apoſtle charges it with *Bondage*; Since this is the very Yoke, which, through this whole Epiſtle, he exhorts his Diſciples to break; and aſſerts, as a moſt valuable Inſtance of Chriſtian Liberty, the Happineſs of being exempted from it.

On the Other hand, *Sarah* the *Free-woman* is the Goſpel-Covenant, and anſwers to *Jeruſalem* above; A Covenant, that came down from Heaven, and intimated God's good liking, by its Promulgation, not only from the Promiſed Land, but from the Place in that Land, which God delighted moſt in, confined his ſolemn Worſhip to, kept his peculiar Reſidence at, and placed his Name, and all the Emblems of his Mercy there. The Perſons under this Covenant are as *Iſaac*, and his Favourite Poſterity. They ſucceed into all the Privileges of their Mother, and to the Inheritance of their Father. A Mother, like her Type, fruitful in numerous Deſcendants from her, though it were late e're ſhe began to bear; And, notwithſtanding the Law was a Diſpenſation antecedent to the Goſpel, (as *Abraham* had *Iſhmael* ſeveral Years before *Iſaac*) yet the Proſelytes to the Goſpel are many more, than ever thoſe to the Law had been. (As *Iſaac*'s Seed was more mighty than *Iſhmael*'s.) The

Prerogatives of this Latter Iſſue excel thoſe of the Firſt; as *Iſhmael*'s Elderſhip gave him no Precedence. And by the Works of the Law no Fleſh is juſtified, but all are ſaved by Virtue of this Second Covenant; as *Iſaac*'s Seed alone, but none of *Iſhmael*'s, inherited the Promiſed Land of *Canaan*.

Thus ſtands the Allegory, with regard to the *Firſt* Branch of it, which diſtinguiſhes the Two Sons of *Abraham*, according to the different Condition of their reſpective Mothers. Before I proceed to the *Second*, it will be expedient to interpoſe a few Obſervations, for the more effectual clearing and confirming ſome of the Differences already mentioned, between the Covenants and Perſons, of which St. *Paul* declares thoſe Mothers, and their Children, to have ſtood for Figures.

1. We ſhall do well, upon this Occaſion, to obſerve, wherein that Servitude properly conſiſted, which the Apoſtle charges the Law of *Moſes* with keeping Men under; Or, in other Words, how that Diſpenſation dealt with Men in the Quality of Servants.

See Epiſtle for Sunday after Chriſtmas.

Now that Charge is made good, by the Nature of the Services it enjoined; A Burthen of Ceremonies, in themſelves of no value; A Number of Purifications, which reached no farther than the cleanſing of the Body; A Prohibition of groſs and outward Acts of Sin, which prevented the Scandal, but not the Guilt; as we employ our Servants in the Drudgery and meaneſt Offices about the Houſe; And, provided our Buſineſs be diſpatched, are not ſollicitous, from what Principle and Diſpoſition our Commands are executed. It is again made good, by the Nature of the Rewards and Puniſhments, choſen for enforcing Obedience to that Law. A Land flowing with Milk and Honey, Victory over Enemies, Health to their Bodies, Increaſe to their Families, Proſperity in their Fortunes, to compenſate the Trouble of their Compliance with this Law. Captivity and Exile, Scarcity and

Barren-

Barrenneſs, Adverſity and Anguiſh, Croſſes and Diſappointments, to avenge their Violation and Contempt of it. Bleſſings and Curſes, temporal and preſent All; Of little value (in compariſon) to Men, who carry immortal Souls about them; and anſwering to thoſe ſlender Conſiderations we treat with Servants for; A little Wages paid down in Hand; A tolerable Subſiſtence from Hand to Mouth; but nothing of a Settlement: Corrections, that follow immediately upon the Fault, and a Diſcipline ſuitable to the Sordidneſs of Their Temper, which looks no farther, than preſent Smart and preſent Profit. It is made good eſpecially, by that Terror and perpetual Conſternation of Mind, neceſſarily conſequent upon a Law, Rigorous in exacting Works, without adminiſtring Ability to perform them; Sufficient to inform Men of their Guilt, but not providing Remedies againſt it; Threatning Death to Tranſgreſſions, (as the Condition of corrupt Nature then ſtood) not to be avoided, and not giving any comfortable Proſpect of a Deliverance: As Slaves are contained in their Duty, by the Scourge held over them, or made to labour in ſight of the Gibbet. Upon all which Accounts it is, that St. *Paul* moſt emphatically expreſſes the Advantage of being freed from ſuch a Law, by ſaying, that we *have not*, in this new Covenant, *received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear*. Rom. viii. 15.

The Goſpel, quite contrary, treats us as Free-men and Sons, Becauſe impoſing upon us nothing unfit for Men of generous Deſcent, and liberal Education. It requires perfect and ſubſtantial Holineſs, Virtues of intrinſick Worth, anſwerable to the Dignity of Humane Nature, ſuch as adorn, exalt, and perfect it: Reſts not in the outward Act, but carries theſe Virtues into our moſt ſecret Parts; Enjoins Purity of Heart, Uprightneſs of Intention; Secures our Innocence, by tearing up Wickedneſs by the Roots; Makes us of a Piece throughout, and ſets us above the little trickiſh Arts of Diſſimulation and

Conſtraint. Theſe Virtues it enforces with the nobleſt Rewards; An Eternity of Joys; Joys worthy of, and agreeable to, an intelligent and immortal Spirit; The Pleaſures of Knowledge, and Goodneſs, and Love; the Knowledge and Love of God, and every deſirable Object: A Recompence worth our waiting for, worth all we can do or endure to obtain it, becauſe the Recompence of Sons; Not our Hire but our Portion; A glorious Inheritance, an everlaſting Settlement. And, *Laſtly*, It inſpires ſuch tender and filial Affection, ſuch a becoming Senſe of Gratitude, ſuch aſſured Hope of being accepted in the Beloved, and conſidered when we do well; ſuch firm Perſuaſion of Pardon, and kind Allowances when we fail, and do amiſs; ſuch Dependence upon Grace and Strength, ſeconding our Endeavours to do better; as fill and ſupport us with inward Complacencies, ſweeten all our Duty, take off the Edge of all our Sufferings, and render the ſo reaſonable Service of ſo good a Father, *Freedom*, *perfect Freedom*.

Secondly, It is neceſſary, for a right underſtanding the Apoſtle, to be rightly informed, in what reſpect the Law of *Moſes* and the Goſpel are ſaid to be Two Covenants. Strictly ſpeaking, as the Church of God, ſo likewiſe the Covenant of God with that Church, hath, ever ſince the Fall of our firſt Parents, been One and the Same. The Terms whereof, on God's part, are, Forgiveneſs of Sins, reſtoring Mankind to Holineſs and Immortality, for the ſake of his Son, and in view of His Sacrifice and Death for them: On Man's part, Belief in that Son, Dependence upon that Sacrifice, Repentance for paſt Offences, and ſincere Obedience for the future. Thus did this (truly called the *Second*) Covenant, repair the Breaches of that *Firſt*, which promiſed Immortality to unſinning Obedience: Made with *Adam* in the time of his Innocence, but broken by Him, and impoſſible to be diſcharged by any Other Man; ſince

ſince all, deſcending from Him, (after His Crime) partake in His Frailty and Corruption.

The Foundation then of all the Comfort reſulting from this Covenant, is the Redemption of the World by the Death of Chriſt. The Promiſes made to *Abraham* and the Patriarchs, were *confirmed in Chriſt*; The Spirit ſpeaking by the Prophets was the *Spirit of Chriſt*; Nay, even before the Flood, it was *Chriſt*, that preached to the old World, *while the Ark was preparing in the days of Noah.* In this reſpect principally it ſeems to be, that the Author to the *Hebrews* ſtiles him *Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever.* So that theſe Covenants, (the Law, and the Goſpel) are not Two, with reſpect to the Subſtance and principal Intent of them; but only in regard of the different Adminiſtration, and the Terms upon which it pleaſed God, at certain Periods, to apply and confer that General Promiſe of Salvation. The Promiſes of the Goſpel indeed, and the Covenant of it, are declared better than That of the Law, as they are propounded with greater Clearneſs, confirmed with ſtronger Evidence, and are in part already accompliſhed. For this hath brought that *Life and Immortality to light*, of which Mankind before had but dark and doubtful Expectations: This hath taught us, in expreſs Terms, what the Law taught in Shadows and Types; with an Obſcurity, which carnal Minds (who, becauſe they beſt like, are not diſpoſed to look beyond, the Temporal) ſeldom diſcerned the Spiritual and Heavenly Bleſſings to be underſtood: It changes the Object of our Faith, from a Meſſiah to come, to one already come; But ſtill the Meſſiah is the Salvation, ſtill the Joys of Heaven the Reward, ſtill Virtue, and Piety, and Faith, the Conditions of attaining it; Whether the ſimpler Worſhip of the Patriarchs, or the Rites of the Moſaical Law, or the Faith and Sacraments of the Goſ-

Gal. iii. 17.

1 Pet. i. 11.

1 Pet. iii. 20.

Hebr. xiii. 8.

pel

pel disburdened of thoſe Rites, were the Method, which Almighty God, in his Wiſdom, ſaw fit, each in their proper Seaſon, to preſcribe, as a neceſſary Qualification for them at that time. The ſhort is this: That, although, for wiſe Reaſons, God hath changed the Inſtances, in which he would be ſerved, as to the outward Teſtimonies of their Belief in, and Love and Reverence for him; and, in this Senſe, the Law and the Goſpel are Two Covenants; Yet that Faith, and Love, and Reverence, were always indiſpenſable Duties of Religion on Our part of the Covenant; The Remiſſion of Sins by Jeſus Chriſt, and a Bleſſed Immortality, always continued the ſame on His part. And thus the Law and Goſpel, which, as to their difference in Modes and Circumſtances, were perfectly diſtinct; Yet, in Effect, and as to the Eſſentials of Obedience and moral Virtue, the Reward aimed at, and the Ground of their Hopes, were One and the Same Covenant.

3. The *Laſt* Particular, duly attended to, will help us rightly to interpret thoſe many diſparaging, and ſeemingly hard, Reflections, caſt upon the Law by St. *Paul*, in the Management of his Controverſy againſt Them, who ſtill ſtood peremptory for the Neceſſity of obſerving it. Now theſe are not meant of the Moral Law, which was a Branch of Natural, and ſtill remains part of the Chriſtian Religion: Nor of the Ceremonial Law, ſo far as any of the Rites enjoined there were underſtood to typify, and to be accepted for the Relation they bore to, Chriſt; For in this Senſe that Law too belonged to the Goſpel. But they are all intended of that Ritual Law, as altogether ſeparate from, and independent on the Goſpel. In this Senſe the Jews took it, who denyed altogether, and perſecuted, the Faith of *Jeſus*. So allowing Salvation to be owing, in no degree to Him, but altogether to the Law. In this the Judaizing Chriſtians took it alſo, who allowed Faith in Jeſus Chriſt to be a partial Cauſe of Salvation, but not ſufficient and effectual,

without

without the Works of the Law. Both which this Apoſtle oppoſes; By proving Jeſus Chriſt, againſt the Jews, and Jeſus Chriſt alone, againſt the Judaizing Chriſtians, to be the Author and efficient Cauſe, and Repentance and Faith in Him the conditional Cauſe, of our Salvation. He ſhews, that the Law, thus taken, was not capable of juſtifying the Obſervers of it at any time; but that at this time it added to their Guilt. The Former, becauſe all its Efficacy depended upon a Repreſentation of Chriſt to come; The Latter, becauſe the continuing to obſerve it as neceſſary, was a conſtructive Denial, at leaſt a Diſparagement, of Chriſt already come. And thus it is, when ſet in Contradiſtinction from, and Oppoſition to, the Goſpel and Faith, and not otherwiſe, that the Law and Works are expoſed, not only, as not *juſtifying*, but even *killing* thoſe, that repoſe their Confidence in them.

II. The Other remarkable Circumſtance, which offers it ſelf to our Conſideration, concerning the Two Sons of *Abraham*, relates to the Manner of their Birth, and is contained in thoſe Words, Ver. 23. *But He, who was of the Bond-woman, was born after the Fleſh, but He, of the Free-woman, was by Promiſe.* In the Production of *Iſhmael* there was only the ſame common Providence, which concurs with, and gives Succeſs to, Natural Cauſes, in ordinary Generations. A Mother in the Vigour of her Age, and a Father not yet abſolutely decayed, required no more. But in that of *Iſaac* every thing was miraculous. For a Mother *dead*, to all theſe Purpoſes, and (to uſe this Apoſtle's Expreſſion elſewhere) a *Father as good as dead*, to become fruitful, was an Effect altogether above, and out of the Power of, Nature. This argued an immediate Operation of Omnipotence, and 'tis urged as a noble Inſtance of Faith, to believe the Promiſe of God. And *Iſaac* is therefore called the Child of Promiſe, becauſe foretold as the choſen Seed, and given in a manner

Rom. iv. 19.
Hebr. xi. 12.

ſo

ſo wonderful, that nothing leſs than the Power and Truth of God could have juſtified the Hopes of him, in Perſons ſo diſabled.

Thus, in Proportion, They, whom theſe Sons repreſent, do likewiſe differ from each Other. Such as depend upon the Law, like Him born by Natural Means, expecting Pardon of their Sins, and the Salvation of their Souls, by Works of their own Performance. But *We*, who, *as Iſaac was, are the Children of Promiſe*, aſcribe theſe Bleſſings to a higher Hand, acknowledge our own Impotence and Deadneſs, and thankfully adore the Truth, the Power, the Goodneſs of God, who, *not by works of Righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his Mercy in Jeſus Chriſt, hath ſaved us*; by Methods aſtoniſhing and ſupernatural; by the Death of his own beloved Son, by the renewing of his own bleſſed Spirit, and by Faith in the Merits of Another.

Ver. 28.

Tit. iii. 5.

And, as in the Manner, ſo in the Privileges of this Birth, the Reſemblance holds, between *Iſaac*, and the Chriſtian Church. The Jews, like *Iſhmael*, were rejected, as St. *Paul* obſerves, becauſe they ſought Righteouſneſs by the Works of the Law; The Chriſtians attain to it, and to all the Prerogatives of this Inheritance, becauſe ſeeking them by Faith. That Principle, by which in all Ages Men were acceptable to God; as the Author to the *Hebrews* proves at large, by Inſtances of the moſt renowned Worthies, both before and under the Law. An Argument, that the Goſpel hath not introduced any new Condition of Salvation in general; but that, as the Virtue of our Lord's Sacrifice had a retroſpect, ſo Faith was the Inſtrument of applying it, to the Perſons, who lived before the actual Oblation of it, made upon the Croſs.

So good Reaſon had St. *Paul* to diſſuade his *Galatians* from returning to the Obſervance of the Law; This being, in effect, to exchange Freedom for Bondage, to

put

put off the Character of Sons, and degrade themſelves into Servants; to quit a certain and indiſputable Title to, and take up an empty Pretence, which never did, never can qualify any Man for, the Inheritance.

Thus much for the Allegory before us, and the Argument built upon it. I juſt mention an Inference or Two, naturally ariſing from this Diſcourſe.

1. *Firſt* then, The Manner of St. *Paul*'s arguing here, from an Allegory fixed upon an Hiſtorical Paſſage of the Old Teſtament, can be no Rule to Us for uſing ſuch Liberties of allegorizing Scripture at Pleaſure. I have, upon Another Occaſion, offered ſome Reaſons, which to me make it probable, that the Jews were not inſenſible of God's Deſign, to order many memorable Events in the Fortunes of ſome of their Anceſtors, ſo as to become typical of things afterwards to be accompliſhed upon the Chriſtian Church. Whether they had any Traditions, directing them, in what Caſes this was done, and conſequently, which of thoſe Events might be, upon Principles of their own fairly argued from, is Matter of Diſpute. But be that as it will, the Apoſtle here had the ſame Divine Spirit to ſecure him from any Error in the Interpretation, which thoſe Firſt Pen-men had to direct them in the Narration. And the Demonſtration, he gave of that Spirit, renders His Authority in the One Caſe, equal to that of *Moſes* in the Other. But this is by no means Our Condition; and therefore it becomes Us to proceed with more Modeſty and Reſtraint. Where the Analogy of Faith is preſerved, a prudent Uſe of this Kind is allowable, in the way of Exhortation, or moral Reflection. But, in the way of Argument, for eſtabliſhing any Point of Doctrine, it is requiſite we keep cloſe to the plain and natural Senſe of the Text; and not wantonly ſport it in ambiguous Niceties, and affected Alluſions. *Boyle's* Lect. 1701.

2. From the Difference illuſtrated here, between the Legal and Evangelical Covenant, it were ſeaſonable to exhort

exhort Men, that they would consider the Dignity and Privilege of their high Calling; and serve God upon Principles, and with a Disposition of Mind, worthy of the near and honourable Relation they bear to him. But in this I am prevented by a former Discourse.

Epist. for S. aft. Christmas.

3. And therefore, I only add, *Lastly*, That we must take good heed not to pervert the Arguments, urged by St. *Paul* against the Works of the Law, to the Prejudice or Disparagement of Good Works in general. The Former are only such Works, as made up the Ceremonial Law, and those are abolished by the Death of Christ, and the Promulgation of his Gospel. The Latter neither begun with, nor expired with that Law, but are Moral Duties, and of eternal Obligation. To say, we are not justified by the Works of either sort, but by Faith only, implies, that God forgives Mens past Sins, and admits them into Covenant, without any such previous Considerations. But to say, that Men may be saved without Good Works, infers, that they are not bound to do any such, after their Admission into that Covenant. And this contradicts the whole Strain, and evacuates all the Precepts, of the Gospel. So wide a distance is there between Justification in St. *Paul*'s Sense; and Salvation, or that final Justification, which is peculiar to the Day of Judgment.

Let us therefore, as this Apostle elsewhere advises, learn to *maintain Good Works*, and to *adorn our Profession* by them. For this is to answer the Character of our Son-ship, to be Followers of our Father, which is in Heaven; and to promote the true End of this Holy Season. But let all this be done with profound Humility, and many mortifying Remembrances of our own Frailties; and, even in our best Estate, and most exalted Devotions, let us approach the Throne of Grace, with a Modesty of which our Church, in the Collect for this Day, hath set us a

Tit. iii. 8. ii. 9.

Pattern:

Pattern: Beſeeching of God, that *We who for our evil deeds do worthily deſerve to be puniſhed, by the comfort of his Grace may mercifully be relieved, through Jeſus Chriſt our* **Lord.** Amen.

The GOSPEL.

S. John vi. 1.

PARAPHRASE.

1. *JEſus went over the ſea of Galilee, which is the ſea of Tiberias.*

1. Jeſus, upon hearing that *John* was put to Death, retired with his Diſciples by Ship, over the Sea, and went to a Defart Place belonging to the City of *Bethſaida*, that they might get a little reſt from the Crowds. (See *Mar.* vi. 31. *Luke* ix. 10.)

2. *And a great multitude followed him, becauſe they ſaw his miracles, which he did on them that were diſeaſed.*

2. But the People followed him on Foot, round about by Land, ſome to hear him, and others to be healed by him. (*Luke* ix. 11.

3. *And Jeſus went up into a mountain, and there he ſat with his diſciples.*

4. *And the Paſſover, a feaſt of the Jews, was nigh.*

4. Theſe were more numerous now, becauſe going from all parts up to the Paſſover.

5. *When Jeſus then lift up his eyes, and ſaw a great company come unto him, he ſaith unto Philip, Whence ſhall we buy bread that theſe may eat?*

6. *(And this he ſaid to prove him, for he himſelf knew what he would do.)*

5, 6. Jeſus, (when he had diſcourſed to them of the Kingdom of God, and healed their Sick, *Luke* ix. 11. *Matth.* xiv. 14.) was minded to make trial of *Philip*'s Faith.

7. *Philip anſwered him, Two hundred penniworth of bread is not ſufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

8. *One of his Diſciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, ſaith unto him,*

9. *There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two ſmall fiſhes: but what are they among ſo many?*

8, 9. Therefore when it was Evening, and his Diſciples deſired him to diſmiſs the Multitudes, that they might provide themſelves with ſome Suſtenance out of the neighbouring Villages; he anſwers, that They ſhould give them to eat; and asked *Philip*, What way he could think of for ſupplying them on this Occaſion. Compare *Mark* vi. 35, 36, 37. Then he enquired what Stock of Proviſions they had, *Mar.* vi. 38. Upon Examination, *Andrew*, *&c.*

10. *And*

10. Jesus hereupon commands the People to be conveniently ranged, by Hundreds and Fifties in a Company; and to put themselves into the usual Posture of Eating.

10. *And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much Grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

11. *And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the Disciples, and the Disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.*

12. *When they were filled, he said unto his Disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

13. *Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above, unto them that had eaten.*

14. This Miracle, like that of feeding the *Israelites* with Manna heretofore, in the Wilderness, convinced those that saw it, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the eminent Prophet foretold by *Moses*.

14. *Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.*

COMMENT.

OUR Saviour's feeding vast Multitudes of People with a very small Quantity of Provisions is, it seems, in the Opinion of the Church, a Miracle of such Consequence, as to deserve Three Publick Readings, in the Course of the Gospels every Year. 'Tis true, there is some Difference in the Circumstances of the Actions related. The Time, the Place, the Number of the Eaters, and That of the Baskets of Fragments left behind, do differ. But the Substance, the miraculous Operation, and the Uses proper to be made of it, are the same, and common to Both. The Scripture taken from St. *Mark* mentions *Four thousand* fed with *Seven Loaves* and a *few small Fishes*: This from St. *John*, *Five thousand* fed with *Five Barley-Loaves and Two small Fishes*. That counts *Seven* Baskets only, this *Twelve*, of Fragments gathered, after they had been

iv Sunday in Lent.
vii and xxv Sundays after Trinity.
vii Sunday after Trinity.
Mark viii. 5, 8, 9.

been ſatisfied. Bnt it is evident, that both *Four*, and *Five* thouſand ſo fed, is an Effect infinitely above the Power of Natural Cauſes and Agents; and ſo is the Remainder of *Seven*, or of *Twelve* Baskets: be the Meaſure of thoſe Baskets, what it will. The Conſiderations therefore, on which I deſign to inſiſt, and the Practical Improvements to be made of them, belonging by Parity of Reaſon to each Account, I ſhall think Both ſufficiently treated of, under the *Three* following Obſervations, and the Inferences reſulting from them.

I. *Firſt*, Our Lord's Behaviour, before this Feeding and Diſtribution, taken notice of Ver. 11. *when he had given thanks, he diſtributed*, &c. Or, as St. *Matthew*, ſomewhat more expreſly, *looking up to Heaven, he bleſſed, and brake, and gave*, &c. Matth. xiv. 19.

II. *Secondly*, The ſatisfying ſo many with ſo ſmall a Store; *He diſtributed of the loaves to his Diſciples, and his Diſciples to the multitude, and likewiſe of the fiſhes, as much as they would.*

III. *Thirdly*, The ſaving of the Remainders, Ver. 12 and 13. Upon theſe Particulars I ſhall endeavour to ſay ſomething, that may be of Uſe to Us in our own reſpective Circumſtances.

I. I begin with our Lord's Behaviour, before this Feeding and Diſtribution, called by the Evangeliſts, *Bleſſing*, and *Giving of Thanks*. By the Former, ſome Interpreters underſtand the multiplying Virtue, which he then commanded down upon the Suſtenance they were about to take; and that marvellous Increaſe in the Hands of the Diſtributers, whereby it became a Repaſt ſufficient for ſo vaſt a Multitude. Others, that he thus gave Thanks to his Father for, and begged his Bleſſing upon it, for the wholeſom Nouriſhment of thoſe Bodies, which were to be fed with it. And theſe Notions ſeem abſolutely neceſſary to that Paſſage of St. *Mark*, who, after the mention of his *giving Thanks*, adds, that he

Chap. viii. 12. *bleſſed a few ſmall fiſhes*, and *commanded to ſet them alſo before* the People.

It is enough to warrant the indifferent Uſe of theſe two Words, that the Forms of Addreſs to Almighty God, upon the Uſe of his Gifts for our Refreſhment, have uſually been mixed; and conſiſted partly of Praiſes, and partly of Petitions. Accordingly we expreſly call this Action, *Giving Thanks*, *Saying Grace*, *Bleſſing the Table*, *Craving a Bleſſing*, and the like. Becauſe the End of ſuch Devotions is manifeſtly Two-fold. Both to render our Acknowledgments to God for his Liberality; and alſo to beg, that it may be ſanctified to us, by tending to promote all thoſe good Purpoſes, which ſuch Bounty is intended to ſerve and advance. The Whole indeed ſeems to have been exactly deſcribed by St. *Paul*, when, condemning the Erroneous Superſtition of Some, who preached up the Diſtinction of Meats, he declares the Lawfulneſs of All, and, that the Danger lay not ſo much in the Kinds eaten, as in the Manner of eating. *Every Creature of God* (ſays he)

1 Tim. iv. 4, 5. *is good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with Thankſgiving. For it is ſanctified by the Word of God, and by Prayer.*

Hence it ſeems evident, that a ſecret Senſe of God's Goodneſs, upon ſuch Occaſions, is by no means enough; but that it is expected, Men ſhould make ſolemn and outward Expreſſions of it, when they receive his Creatures for their Support: That this is a Service and Homage, not only due to Him, but profitable to Themſelves. The Creatures are His, and therefore to be *received with Thankſgiving*: But the *Sanctifying* thoſe Creatures to Man's Uſe, and rendring that which is *good* in its own Nature, ſerviceable and advantagious to the Party receiving, this depends upon the *Word*, or particular Bleſſing of the Creator; and therefore it is Our part to draw down that *Word* by *Prayer*.

This

This is to eat, and drink, like Men and Chriſtians, when we perform an Act of Worſhip, which appears to have had a place, even in Natural Religion, and the Practice of Heathens themſelves: Which was certainly obſerved by the Jews; Which St. *Paul* would not omit in all the Confuſion of a Storm and Shipwrack: Which we have ſeveral Inſtances of in our Saviour: Which here he performed with great Seriouſneſs and Zeal, thus teaching us, when *looking up to Heaven*, that *the Eyes of all* ought, in the moſt literal Senſe, *to wait* upon that Lord, *who gives them their Meat in due Seaſon.*

Druſius on 1 Sam. ix. 13. Acts xxvii. 35. Matth. xiv. 19. xv. 36. Luke xxiv. 30.

And, What part of Religion can be better contrived, to keep up a conſtant Awe and Reverence of God in our Minds? Which are too apt, but will ſcarce find it poſſible, to forget him, when accuſtomed to call upon his Name, at every ſupply of thoſe Natural Appetites and Neceſſities, which cannot but of courſe refreſh our Memories very often. What can more effectually humble us, with a juſt Senſe of our own precarious and depending Condition? What more diſpoſe Men to uſe his Gifts moderately, to entertain them thankfully, to be content with their Portion, if it be little; to impart of their Abundance, if it be much; to compaſſionate thoſe who want the ſame Comforts, to recollect, that they are Stewards; and that their Orders are, to *give freely of what they have received freely?* What, *Laſtly*, can be more likely to ſanctify, to enlarge, and multiply our Bleſſings, than ſo decent, ſo publick, ſo devout, ſo humble a Teſtimony of our Great Benefactor's Goodneſs?

II. The *Second* Thing, I propoſed to conſider on this Occaſion, is, The ſatisfying ſo many with ſo ſmall a Store. And here I might obſerve the Zeal of theſe Multitudes, the Nature of that Refreſhment they were provided with, the Quantity, which only was a preſent

Meal, when they were ready to faint: All which may assure good Men, that God will provide, by some way they know not of, Supplies for those Wants, which they are content to undergo, in pursuance of their Duty: That Necessaries they may depend upon him for, but if he give more, all that is Over-measure. But at present I rather choose to insist upon a Reflection, which St. *Augustin* hath pointed out to me, and such as is of universal Usefulness and Concern.

'Tis, that This Feeding of so vast a Multitude, by a Method altogether extraordinary and miraculous, should be used, as a seasonable Hint, for the Consideration of, and Thanks due for, that bounteous Providence of God, which every Day feeds Numbers infinitely greater, in a very wonderful, though ordinary Manner. For, What Proportion do Five thousand Men, bear to those numberless Kindreds and Countries, that constantly subsist upon His Liberality? What is this One marvellous Enlargement of Five Loaves and Two Fishes, to the unconceivable Productions of Animals, the Variety of Plants, and Herbs, and other Increase of the Earth, and the many unknown ways, by which *he opens his hand, and fills all things living with Plenteousness?*

These Operations do not indeed awaken our Attention equally, because frequent and regular. They have their stated Seasons, and Returns, and Custom and Order render them familiar. In Some of them too the Divine Wisdom sees fit to use the Skill and Labour of Man, as Instruments. This takes off yet more from our Wonder. For, so much as we see Ground of attributing any Effect to Second Causes, so much we usually find ourselves diverted from considering and honouring the First Cause. Yet, would we but examine these Matters curiously, there is not an Instance among them all, but yields a copious Subject of Astonishment, as well as of Praise.

To mention That, with which the World ſeems beſt acquainted; No Increaſe is more beneficial, none more promoted by our Art and Induſtry, than that of Corn. But how prodigious, how amazing is even This, if we ſtand to take a cloſe and diſtinct View of it? The Huſbandman, 'tis true, tills and ſows, but, after all his Toil and Care, our Saviour's Obſervation is moſt true; that *he caſteth Seed into the Ground, which cometh up he knoweth not how.* He ſees it keep its due Seaſons, and *bring forth firſt the Blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn in the Ear.* He knows, that *the Year is crowned with the Goodneſs of the Lord, and that his Clouds drop Fatneſs:* and feels, by the Product, that he hath truſted his Pains and Expence, and all the Hopes of Both, in good Hands: That there is One above, who watches his Treaſure for him, and returns it with large Intereſt; That He *ſends the former and the latter Rain*, and comforts his Heart with *the appointed Weeks of Harveſt.* And from hence he does, or he ſhould, take continual Occaſions of thanking and reverencing Almighty God; ſince no Profeſſion can furniſh more palpable Demonſtrations of his good Providence. For This was *the Witneſs*, which, St. *Paul* ſays, ought to have convinced the groſeſt Heathens, that *God gave them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladneſs.*

Mar. iv. 27, 28.

Pſal. lxv. 12.

Acts xiv. 17.

But, ought it not likewiſe to ſtrike them with Wonder and Amazement? For, although we ſee this done perpetually, yet what Account can we give of its being done? Can the Wiſeſt of us all tell, how the Sun darts his Rays, and conveys a Prolifick Warmth into the Bowels of the Earth; How that Genial Heat kindles into freſh Life that Subſtance, which the Soil had putrefied; How Corruption and Death become neceſſary to Fruitfulneſs; and every Field preaches our own Reſurrection? For, though Reaſon cannot, yet Experience does,

make it undeniably plain, that, *what we ſow is not quickened, except it die; and that which we ſow, we ſow not that Body that ſhall be, but bare Grain; but God giveth it a Body, as it hath pleaſed Him; and to every Seed his own Body.*

1 Cor. xv. 37, 38.

This is what we call Natural, becauſe it proceeds by Method and Rule, and in a *Series* of Cauſes. But if we trace Each of theſe to its firſt Head, there is no leſs Demonſtration of Infinite Power and Wiſdom in this Increaſe, than in That, which, in the Scripture now at hand, we diſtinguiſh as miraculous, becauſe it was extraordinary and uncommon. Nay, I had almoſt ſaid, the Demonſtration I am ſpeaking of is greater. For, when a Miracle is wrought, Nature is ſet aſide, and its Proceſs ſuperſeded; the thing is done at once, in an inſtant, and at an heat. But in That, which we call Nature, Providence acts by Inferior Cauſes, and ſome of thoſe free ones too. And, albeit the Whole goes on leiſurely, and makes leſs vigorous Impreſſions upon the Senſes: The Multiplicity however of thoſe Cauſes, what Wiſdom muſt it require to direct, what Power to influence and invigorate, what ſteady Management to keep them uniform? So that This is, in Effect, a long Succeſſion of Wonders; A Chain, in which, if one Link be broken or diſplaced, the Whole falls to pieces. And the Links of this Chain are the Variations of every Day in the whole Year. Thus every Furrow in our Fields is loaded with Evidences of a Divine Power: And not *Five thouſand* only, but Millions of Millions, to whom God gives Meat in due Seaſon, are ſuſtained by Omnipotence; and not one of them ever feeds at leſs Expence, than that of a Wonder, nay, of an infinite Train of Wonders.

III. The *Laſt* Head, I promiſed to ſpeak to, is, Our Bleſſed Maſter's Care, That the Fragments remaining might be gathered up, and put into Baskets. For which, no doubt, this had been a ſufficient Reaſon, that Thoſe might

might prove both the Reality of the Miracle, and the exceeding Greatneſs of the Increaſe. But, in regard our Lord aſſigns Another, when ſaying, *Gather up the Fragments, that nothing be loſt:* The proper Uſe, I think, of this Head, is, thence to form a Direction, how to manage our Subſtance to the beſt Advantage, and ſo to approve our ſelves Charitable and Kind, as at the ſame time not to be Profuſe and Indiſcreet. *Jeſus*, 'tis true, by ſetting his whole Store before the Multitudes, hath left us a Pattern of Beneficence and Largeneſs of Heart. The Proviſions, growing ſo prodigiouſly upon his Hands, are an Emblem and Intimation of thoſe unaccountable Acceſſions, which we may ſometimes obſerve to the Fortunes of generous and merciful Perſons: And, by ſome Paſſages of Scripture, an unwary Reader might be led to think, that in thoſe Actions there could be no Exceſs, at leaſt no Poſſibility of Offending by ſuch Exceſs. But yet the ſame *Jeſus* would not, that even *Fragments* ſhould be loſt; And herein he hath ſhewed, that all Reſerving for the future is not unlawful; that Charity is very conſiſtent with Frugality, indeed not only that they may, but ſhould go together. For God will be ſure to make a mighty Difference, between the Virtue, and the ſpecious Extreme beyond it; between the Liberal, and the Laviſh Man.

That Every one is bound, by the Rules both of Prudence and Religion, to moderate his Expences, keep within his own Property, and retrench all Superfluities unſuitable to his Calling and Condition, is too notorious to need a Proof. That, which the Caſe before us ſeems rather to ſuggeſt, is, good Husbandry, in not laying out, even upon proper Objects, beyond ſuch Proportions, as the Circumſtances of our Affairs will allow. For, although the Poor be our Care, yet are not They our only Care. The Juſtice of thoſe Demands, which our Families have upon us, I had Occaſion Formerly to take notice of. But, beſides

Epiſtle for Advent Sunday.

Theſe, the Caſualties of Life, the Infirmities of Age and Sickneſs, are very lawful and reaſonable Reſtraints upon us. Our Saviour, 'tis confeſs'd, commanded the Young Man in the Goſpel, to *go ſell all he had, and give to the Poor.* But this was done, as a Trial of his pretended Perfection, a Precept Perſonal to Him, not of univerſal Obligation, nor to be drawn into Example raſhly and at all Adventures. The Primitive Chriſtians alſo brought their Goods into one common Fund, from whence Diſtribution was made, as each of the Brethren had need. But this is commended, only as an Act ſeaſonable Then, not for a Standard of Practice, that ſhould be perpetual. At this rate indeed our Saviour's Declaration, that we ſhall *have the Poor always with us*, could not hold true. So that all the Inference, reſulting from theſe Inſtances, is, that Men ſhould be in a conſtant diſpoſition of Mind, moſt willingly to exchange the Treaſures of this Life for thoſe of a Better; and to part even with their All, when the Service of God, and the Good of Souls, require it. But, in ordinary Caſes, the Exigencies of Other People are ſo to be conſidered, as that our Own be not altogether overlook'd; And, while we help Them, care muſt be taken not to rob and perfectly ſtrip Our Selves.

Matth. xix. 21.

Again, The very Conſideration of the Objects we would relieve, makes this Caution neceſſary. For, the Wants and Diſtreſſes of our Brethren are not of one Day's Production, or Continuance. Freſh Objects worthy of our Pity are perpetually preſenting themſelves; And therefore we ſhould do ill to be ſo laviſh upon One, or a Few, as thereby to fall under a Diſability of ſuccouring the Reſt. That, which is conſtantly a Duty, obliges us to ſuch prudent Reſerves, as may keep us in Condition to perform it long and often, even as oft as fit Occaſions ſhall call for it at our Hands. Theſe Reaſons (to name no more) are ſufficient to prove, that Men may, and ought to proceed by a Zeal tempered with Prudence,

dence, even in Gifts of Piety and Charity; And not abandon their Subſtance, and, by laying out all in a Heat, either cut off their own Power of being charitable for the future, or ſo reduce it, as to become Objects of Charity themſelves. And therefore I ſhall cloſe with a few ſhort Rules, in which the Example of our Saviour may be Serviceable, for directing our Diſpoſals, and our Behaviour in this Point.

We cannot but obſerve, that the Multitudes, now fed by Him, were in a Place remote from all Accommodations, ready to faint for Hunger, driven to that Neceſſity, by following him ſo far, and attending him ſo long, that they might reap the Benefit of his Miracles, and his Doctrine. Now, ſince the Neceſſities of our Brethren in Want are by far more and greater, than the Liberality of the Wealthieſt and moſt Open-handed Man can poſſibly ſupply; It is abſolutely neceſſary, that we ſhould give with ſome Diſtinction. Wherein we ſhall do well to imitate our Lord in the following Particulars.

1. That we generally beſtow our Charity upon Such, as are leaſt in a Condition of ſuſtaining themſelves. For that which the Deſart was to theſe Multitudes, the ſame, in Effect, are Old Age, Maimed Limbs, Long Sickneſs, Multitude of Helpleſs Children, and the Calamities, which more immediately and viſibly come from the Hand of God, to the Poor in general. They diſable them, I mean, from furniſhing themſelves, by painful Labour and honeſt Induſtry, and, in ſo doing, they lay them at Our Doors, and charge Us with them. But as for Them, whom Pride or Profuſion, Sloth or Vice have reduced; Them, who continue Poor, only becauſe they will not take any Trouble to be otherwiſe; the Laws of God have not commanded, and thoſe of Men wiſely diſcountenance, the ſame Compaſſion for ſuch. To Them, who make Wandring and Beggery a Trade, and chooſe the Shame, but Eaſe, of That, before an honeſt

neſt and laborious Livelihood, the beſt and trueſt Charity, is what *Solomon*, and Our own Laws, have preſcribed, *A Scourge for the Sluggard, and a Rod for the Fool's Back.* Want then, Involuntary Want, is the proper Recommendation to our Pity and Relief. And This is to be rated, not always according to what Men ſtand in need of, but ſometimes according to the Circumſtances, from which they are fallen: Not always according to what they endure, but often, by their being more or leſs deſtitute of Remedies and Helps againſt it. This gives the Widow and the Fatherleſs, the Out-caſt and the Stranger, a double Title to our Pity; if Their Neceſſities be the ſame with other Perſons, who yet have Relations and Friends to aſſiſt and take care of them.

2. Theſe Multitudes followed Chriſt for his Miracles and his Doctrine; and hence we may learn, that thoſe Poor ought to have a Preference, who frequent and love the Worſhip and Service of God, and lead honeſt and orderly Lives. If the Image of God in Man be the true Ground of our Charity, then They, who are doubly like him, are doubly worthy of our Charity. And therefore great Difference ſhould be made, between thoſe lewd and ſcandalous Wretches, who deface and diſhonour his Likeneſs impreſſed upon their Souls; and Them, who by their Virtues, and ſuch Improvements, as their Circumſtances are capable of, endeavour to reſemble him more and more: To the Similitude of Nature adding that better and more valuable one of Goodneſs and Grace.

3. Once more, This Action of our Lord inſtructs us, that it ſuffices, if our Charity miniſter to Mens Neceſſities, without thinking it ſelf obliged to provide, either that which is ſuperfluous at preſent, or ſo much as may arm them againſt future Contingencies. It ſhews us too, that Managery is an Ornament, and an Advantage to our Charity. And to this Purpoſe that Advice of St. *Paul* is highly commendable, that Men would con-

trive

trive their Diſtributions ſo, as to be regular and eaſy, by *laying up in ſtore of that which God hath proſpered them with*, as their Affairs will permit. Thus would our Alms be always in readineſs, and the Poor would have a ſeparate Purſe. A Fund, that, by riſing inſenſibly, would be parted with leſs grudgingly: A Tribute due for our Succeſſes, and a moſt reaſonable Return, to Him, from whom we receive our All, nay who condeſcends to accept of part of his own again, as not only paid back, but given to himſelf; And who will not fail, in his own Time and Way, to recompence it accordingly, either before, or at, the laſt great Day of Account. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

The Fifth Sunday in Lent.

The COLLECT.

WE beſeech thee, Almighty God, mercifully to look upon thy people; that by thy great goodneſs they may be governed and preſerved evermore, both in body and ſoul, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Hebr. ix. 11.

CHriſt, being come an high Prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building.

PARAPHRASE.

11. Chriſt being made a High Prieſt, by whoſe Sacrifice and Interceſſion, not temporal, but heavenly and eternal Bleſſings are obtained; by a Tabernacle more excellent than the Moſaical, even his Holy Body, conceived and born, not after the common Manner, but by an Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, miraculous and divine,

12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

12. And not by the Blood of Bullocks and Goats, by which the High Prieſt on the Day of Atonement came into the Holy of Holies; but by his own Blood, He entred into Heaven, the true Holy Place: And that once for all, becauſe the Redemption he hath obtained for us is (not like the Legal, valid for a Year only, but) eternal.

13. *For*

13. Nor is it ſtrange, that his Blood ſhould have ſo noble and laſting Effects, to any who

13. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the Fleſh:*

remember, how that of Beaſts heretofore, and the Aſhes made of a burnt red Heifer, removed all Legal Pollutions, and reſtored the Unclean, when ſprinkled with them, to the Service of the Tabernacle. (*Numb.* xix.)

14. Shall not then Chriſt's Blood, (whoſe Perſon is Divine, and ſo his Blood the Blood of God (*Acts* xx. 28.)

14. *How much more ſhall the blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without ſpot to God, purge your conſcience from dead works to ſerve the living God.*

by the Unity of the ſame Eternal Spirit) when He offered himſelf a moſt unblemiſhed Sacrifice, be effectual to cleanſe mens Souls, (as that of Beaſts did formerly their Bodies) from the Guilt of thoſe Sins that make liable to death (as that Other from Pollutions contracted by dead Bodies) and qualify them for the Acceptance of their Service to God (as that Other admitted Men to the Communion of the Sanctuary.)

15. To this End, (or by this Blood) he hath ſealed a new Covenant between God and Us; that ſo, in Conſideration of his Death for

15. *And for this cauſe he is the Mediator of the new Teſtament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt Teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal inheritance.*

the Expiation of Sins, which the firſt Legal Covenant could not expiate, all who are admitted to, and perform their part of it may receive the Promiſe of Immortality and Happineſs in Heaven, their Title to which is clear, their Sins being thus atoned for and forgiven.

COMMENT.

THE Pre-eminence of the Evangelical above the Legal Covenant, was aſſerted in the Epiſtle for the laſt Lord's Day. The Church now proceeds to confirm that Aſſertion, by appointing one for this Day, which inſtances in ſome Particulars, wherein that Pre-eminence conſiſts. An Argument carried on, by ſome Compariſons, drawn from that Tabernacle, and the Service of it, in which the Glory of the Levitical Diſpenſation principally lay.

I. The Perſon officiating.
II. The Place where he miniſtred.
III. The Sacrifices offered.
IV. The Ends and Effects of thoſe Sacrifices.

Theſe

Theſe are the Heads of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning, and ſhall be ſo of my preſent Diſcourſe, upon this Subject.

I. The *Firſt* Preference, given here to the Goſpel-Covenant, regards the Perſon Officiating in the Chriſtian Sacrifice. Thoſe among the Jews were offered by the Succeſſion and Poſterity of *Aaron*, Men in all Points upon a Level with their Brethren, excepting that Diſtinction God had put, by the Honour of devoting them to his Altar, and by Their Miniſtry conveying his Bleſſings to, and receiving the Homage and Acknowledgments due from, the Body of his People. But ſtill thoſe Bleſſings were, could be, no other, than the Oeconomy they attended upon had indented for. Which, properly ſpeaking, extended no farther, than the Privileges of communicating with God in the Ordinances he had preſcribed, and the Mercies of an Earthly *Canaan*, of which ſuch Communion, regularly obſerved, was made the Condition, and the Pledge.

The ſame high Office does our *Jeſus* execute, under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, but, (as the Chapters foregoing have proved by ſeveral Inſtances) to much greater Advantage. He was not, like the Jewiſh High Prieſts, taken *from among Men*, not of the ſame common Frailties and Corruptions, with thoſe for whom he mediates: but is *holy and harmleſs, undefiled and ſeparate from Sinners:* He conſequently *needed not*, like Them, *to offer for his own Sins firſt, and then for the Peoples:* He was therefore a ſucceſsful Sacrificer for his Peoples Sins, becauſe under no Guilt of his own, to render him obnoxious, and require a Sacrifice: He was not of the Tribe of *Levi*, or the Order of *Aaron*, whoſe Prieſthood was temporary, and the Perſons admitted to it mortal: But of the Order of *Melchiſedec*, of *a Prieſthood unchangeable*; In reſpect of its ſolemn Inſtitution confirmed by the Oath of God; In reſpect alſo of the Prieſt himſelf, *who liveth for ever to make Interceſſion* vii. 26, 27.

vii. 20, 21, 23, 24, 25.

ceſſion for, and, conſequently, *is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, them that come to God by Him.* Once more, He is an *High Prieſt of good things to come*; not employed in a Miniſtry, whoſe Rites and Ordinances were, and derived their chief Value from being, Shadows and Significations of a future and more perfect Sacrifice; *A Figure for the time preſent, and impoſed on Men until the time of Reformation*; But His Sacrifice was the Subſtance of all thoſe Shadows, the great Original of all thoſe Figures: And his Miniſtry that *very Reformation*, which was a Diſpenſation laſting and perfect: Laſting, becauſe perfect, leaving no place for farther Improvement. None was intended beyond it, None could be after it, becauſe None could be above it. An High Prieſt alſo of *good things to come*; As the Effect and Influence of his Sacrifice reaches beyond this World, and all fading Enjoyments of it; and ſecures Us a Right to Spiritual Advantages, to a bleſſed Immortality, to Regions of Glory, which all the pompous Deſcriptions of the Beauty, the Plenty, the every deſirable Quality, by which (their Type) the earthly *Canaan* is at any time recommended, do but very poorly, very faintly reſemble.

ix. 9, 10.

So manifeſtly are the Odds on Our ſide of the Compariſon, in reſpect of the Perſon mediating in each Covenant, The Jews Sons of *Aaron*, and Chriſt Our High Prieſt; Theirs High Prieſts of a *Figure for the time then preſent*, Ours *an High Prieſt of good things to come.* Let us now follow St. *Paul* to the Second Branch of his Compariſon,

II. The Place of Miniſtration. Of this the beginning of the Chapter acquaints us, that it conſiſted of Two Parts, uſed by the Prieſt in Religious Worſhip. The Firſt, called the *Sanctuary*, in which the Prieſts *accompliſhed the daily Service of God*: The Second, *into which the High Prieſt alone went, and that but once every Year*, and then

Ver. 2. 6, 7.

too

too *not without Blood, which he offered for himself, and for the Errors of the People.* But of *Chriſt* our High Prieſt, it is ſaid, that He *entred into the Holy Place once*, once for all: *by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to ſay, not of this building.* Ver. 11, 12.

Of this *greater and more perfect Tabernacle* Expoſitors have given theſe Two Senſes.

1. Some underſtand Heaven by it, in Agreement with thoſe other Paſſages of this Epiſtle; Which call the Jewiſh Tabernacle, *the Example and Shadow of Heavenly things*; and Heaven, *the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not Man.* Which declare, That *to be the Patterns of Things in the Heavens:* This, *the Heavenly Things themſelves:* Which affirm, that *Chriſt is not entred into the Holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true; but into Heaven it ſelf, there to appear in the Preſence of God for us.* The Importance of the Place, taken thus, agrees with the Jewiſh Notion likewiſe, that God intended the Tabernacle for an Emblem of the whole World: (whence ſome have thought that Title, *a worldly Sanctuary*, to have been given it here) The Outward repreſenting the Earth and the Sea, The Inward, Heaven. The Former, as ſenſible and familiar, The Latter, inviſible, and as yet inacceſſible to us. And thus Our High Prieſt excels the Jewiſh, becauſe offering the Blood of Expiation in that very Heaven, which the Sanctuary on Earth figured; in a Holy Place, not of Humane Art and Contrivance, but created by Divine Power; in the Real, and not the Typical Preſence of God.

Ch. vii. 5. viii. 2.

Ch. ix. 23, 24.

Ch. ix. 1.

Others there are, that interpret the Words of Chriſt's Body. Obſerving, that the Scripture ſometimes calls Humane Bodies, *Tabernacles*, that this very Epiſtle terms Chriſt's *Fleſh* the

2 Cor. v. 1. 2 Pet. i. 14. Ch. x. 19, 20.

the Veil, through which a Paſſage is opened for us *into the Holieſt*; that St. *John*, ſpeaking of the Incarnation of the Word, expreſſes it by pitching his Tabernacle among us, or, in our Humane Nature; and ſays, that thence his *Glory* was conſpicuous: And again, that our Bleſſed Lord himſelf calls his own Body *a Temple*. Manifeſtly alluding by Theſe, to the Jewiſh Tabernacle, and Temple, and Glory of the Lord exhibiting himſelf there. Strong Confirmations theſe are of that Preſence, by which God dwelt thus among his People, being intended as a Type of that real and viſible Preſence, by which, in the Body of his Incarnate Son, he actually dwelt with, and exhibited himſelf to Men: A Rational Account, why the Worſhip of God, and Mens Acceptance in it, ſhould be confined to that Place of his Symbolical Preſence; becauſe intimating, that there is *no Name given unto Men, whereby they muſt be ſaved, but only the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, with whoſe Humane Nature he is Subſtantially preſent. And this Senſe will likewiſe correſpond perfectly well with that Character of this Tabernacle, *Not made with Hands*, that is to ſay, *not of this building*; In regard of Chriſt's Humane Nature not being brought into the World by Humane Means; (which being *made with Hands* often denotes) nor in the ordinary way; but born of an unblemiſhed Virgin, and conceived by an Almighty and immediate Operation of the Holy Ghoſt. In all which Reſpects, this Tabernacle too was *greater and more perfect than that under the Law*; and by it, by the Blood which thus became his, he entred into Heaven, as the High Prieſt heretofore entred into the Holy Place on Earth. The Manner of Entring was thus far alike in both; but the Blood they carried in, by no means alike. Which brings us to the

John i. 14.

John ii. 19, 21.

III. *Third* Conſideration, upon which the Pre-eminence of our High Prieſt is aſſerted in the Scripture now at

at hand, The Difference of the Sacrifices offered. Their High Prieſt entred by *the Blood of Goats and Calves*; Ours, with *his own Blood*, and This *the Blood of Chriſt, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God.* Ver. 12, 14.

The Plan, upon which the Apoſtle forms his Argument in this Epiſtle, ſo far as the Sacrifices of each Diſpenſation are concerned, is, that moſt ſolemn of all the Levitical Services, the Great Day of Atonement: The Directions given by God for This, ſo far as affect the Point under debate, are as follow. The High Prieſt is commanded to kill and offer a Bullock, as a Sin-Offering for himſelf and his Houſe: Afterwards to take a Cenſer full of Coals from the Altar, and his Hands full of ſweet Incenſe, and to bring this within the Veil, to make a Cloud of Smoak, which might cover the Mercy-Seat; Then to bring in of the Blood of the Bullock, and to ſprinkle it upon, and before, the Mercy-Seat. Afterwards, to do the ſame with the Goat, which by Lot was that Day to be ſlain. The Method of proceeding is the ſame in Both. The only Difference is, that, as the Bullock was an Atonement for the High Prieſt and his Houſe; The Goat was a Sin-Offering for the whole Body of the People. All which, and more upon the ſame Occaſion, not neceſſary to be mentioned here, we have at large, in the Sixteenth Chapter of *Leviticus*.

Hence it is, that the High Prieſt is ſaid to enter *into the Holy Place by the Blood of Goats and Calves*: Becauſe he might not go in there at any time without Blood; nor with the Blood of any Sacrifices but Theſe, nor with That neither, except on this Occaſion.

Mean while, how far are theſe Creatures and their Blood, below the Value of that of a Man; But eſpecially of an Innocent Man, ſuch as Chriſt was? For that is meant by *offering himſelf to God without ſpot*. An Alluſion to that Ordinance in the Law, which (as I had occaſion to remark before) rendred all Beaſts,

wherein was any Blemiſh, incapable of being offered in Sacrifice: But, yet more eſpecially, How contemptible an Expiation was the Blood of theſe Creatures, in compariſon of His, *who offered himſelf through the Eternal Spirit*, who was not only Man but God; and, by taking Our Humane into His Divine Nature, hath rendred this Sacrifice of Merit invaluable, of Efficacy unqueſticnable, of Benefit unconceivable? So that, in no regard does the Glory of Our High Prieſt excell and eclipſe the Legal, more eminently, than in that, which this Paſſage ſets before us, as a

IV. *Fourth* Difference between them, The Ends and Effects of their reſpective Sacrifices. The Legal *ſanctify to the purifying of the Fleſh*; *The Blood of Chriſt purgeth the Conſcience from dead Works.* The Legal High Prieſt entred into the Holy Place once a Year; The Evangelical *once* in all. The Effect of Chriſt entring is a *Redemption of the Tranſgreſſions that were under the Firſt Teſtament*; Conſequently, the Firſt Teſtament did not take away the Tranſgreſſions, even of its own Time. *Laſtly*, This is the nobleſt, and the peculiar Excellence of Our High Prieſt, that he hath obtained *eternal Redemption for us*, and that, by means of His Death, *they, that are called, receive the promiſe of eternal Inheritance.*

Ver. 13, 14.
Ver. 12.
Ver. 15.
Ver. 12.
Ver. 15.

By all theſe Characters is ſignified the Weakneſs, the Inſufficiency, of the Levitical Sacrifice, and the Power and Efficacy of Chriſt's alone, for taking away the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin. The Grounds of Both would take up too much Time to be conſidered now, and will be more ſeaſonably enlarged upon hereafter. But, in regard the Apoſtle attributes ſome, though not an equal, Effect to the Legal, in the Compariſon at the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Verſes; I will endeavour to adjuſt

Epiſt. for Wedn. before Eaſter, and Good Friday.

adjuſt that Point, and then draw toward a Concluſion of this Diſcourſe.

The Law of *Moſes* then may be conſidered, either Abſtractedly, and in its Literal; or more Extenſively, and in its Myſtical, Meaning. According to the Former, Its Promiſes and Threatnings are merely Temporal, Its Ceremonies, Conditions of attaining the One, and eſchewing the Other; as the Obſervance or Neglect of Them kept up, or forfeited, a Right of Communion in Thoſe Ordinances. According to the Latter, Eternal Benefits and Puniſhments were implied, under the Expreſſions of Temporal; and thus the Outward Ceremonies were Types of, and Admonitions to, inward Virtues. We do not therefore, by calling Theſe Shadows and Figures, take from them all Manner of Efficacy and Influence upon the Perſons heretofore obliged by them: But allow them ſuch, as bears Proportion to this Twofold Character, in which they ſtood. The Impurities contracted in Violation of the Law plainly drew on a double Inconvenience. One, that the Unclean incurred the Wrath of God, and the Sentence of Death, here and hereafter; Not only their Bodies, but their Conſciences, were defiled by Acts, which, in that State of things, were appointed Terms of Salvation and God's Favour; The Other, that, as a Mark of preſent Diſfavour, they ſtood incapable of Communion, either Civil with their Brethren, or Religious with Almighty God.

Now the Laſt of theſe Inconveniencies was directly and effectually taken off, by thoſe Reſpective Rites and Sacrifices, which the Law preſcribed in ſuch Caſes. They were reſtored to the Camp or the City, the Tabernacle or the Temple, to all the Benefits and Advantages expreſly contracted for by that Covenant. But, as to the myſtical and more valuable Part, the purging of the Conſcience, delivering from Death Spiritual, and, as a Conſequence of Sin forgiven, qualifying them for a Poſſeſſion of the Heavenly *Canaan*; Theſe were reſerved

for a nobler Sacrifice; a Blood better than that of Goats and Calves: Yet ſtill a Blood, figured and repreſented by, and virtually ſhed in, Theirs. Hence the Apoſtle tells his *Coloſſians*, thoſe Ordinances *were a Shadow of things to come, but the Body is of Chriſt.* So far then as they contributed to the Reconciliation of Offenders, ſo far they did not work by any Inherent and eſſential, but by a derived and relative, Power. The Virtue and Acceptance of the Type was entirely owing to its Antitype; For all the Bloody Sacrifices prefigured the *Offering of the Body of Jeſus once for all.* Nay, even thoſe Temporal Advantages, which were actually ſaved to them, or recovered, by their Sacrifices, were intended to typify ſuch as are Spiritual and Eternal. So perfectly figurative was their whole Oeconomy, So induſtriouſly contrived for Service and Subordination to the Goſpel-Diſpenſation; that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the Law was little elſe than the Goſpel typified, the Goſpel was the Law explained and accompliſhed. And the Difference between them is like that, which diſtinguiſhes Shadow from Subſtance, Clearneſs from Obſcurity, and Proſpect from Poſſeſſion.

Coloſ. ii. 17.

I only add an earneſt Exhortation, that Two Expreſſions in the Epiſtle for this Day may be heedfully attended to. The One, that *they who are called*, (effectually ſo, by obeying that Call) are the Perſons ſaid to *receive the eternal Inheritance.* The Other, That the *Blood of Chriſt purges our Conſciences from dead Works to ſerve the living God.* By Both is meant, that even ſuch an High Prieſt, and ſuch a Sacrifice, will not ſave Them, who take no care to ſave themſelves. But, as the Jewiſh Rites reſtored Men to the Temple, and capacitated them for frequenting Religious Worſhip; ſo the Chriſtian Expiation is an encouragement to, a Comfort in, an Aſſurance that we ſhall be accepted by, our Service; but by

Ver. 15.

Ver. 14.

by no means a Diſpenſation from it. Were it not for this, our Endeavours muſt be fruitleſs, and, no wonder, if we turn'd deſperate: But the Knowledge of an Atonement made baniſhes our Terrors, frees us from all that Conſternation and Confuſion, which the Senſe of Guilt, and the Fears of Vengeance, naturally create. This inſpires Life and Vigour into our Undertakings. For nothing is ſo powerful a Motive *to be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*, as the being perfectly ſatisfied, *that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* And this is directly our Caſe. Live without Sins we could not, make Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God for our Sins we could not: And therefore God hath done this for us, and without us, by providing himſelf *a Lamb that taketh away the Sins of the World.* That which is left ſtill upon our Hands, we cannot indeed do without God, but he hath promiſed to do this for us too: Yet, ſo to do it for us, as to do it with us, and in us, and by us. And *how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* How ill do we anſwer the End of this Sacrifice, which was *to purify a peculiar People, zealous of good works*, if we turn the Grace of God into Wantonneſs, and render it an Occaſion of Security and wicked Preſumption? Let us remember, the Deſign of our Church was, by ſuch a ſupporting Account of our High Prieſt and his Sacrifice, to raiſe our Spirits under thoſe Dejections, into which our Sorrow for Sin is preſumed at preſent to have ſunk them; To bring us to the Diſpoſition of thoſe honeſt Debtors, who, the more they are forgiven, the more they love; And we know what Judgment muſt needs be made, what Proofs expected of That, by Him who hath ſaid, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* John xiv. 15.

PARAPHRASE.

46. What Sign of a falſe Prophet can you charge me with?

48. Have we not reaſon to call thee a Separatiſt, and Enemy to our Religion, a Man poſſeſs'd, &c. What can we ſay too bad of thee?

50. I do not covet Honour, as falſe Prophets do; but there is one, who obſerves how I am treated, and will call it to account.

51. By receiving my Doctrine, I tell you, and by that only, can you eſcape dying eternally.

52. They, underſtanding him of Temporal Death, reply

54. For me to exalt my ſelf were very vain and exceptionable, but my Father, even the God ye profeſs to belong to, he honours me by bearing Teſtimony to my Doctrine.

56. *Abraham* with great Joy ſaw by Faith my then diſtant coming into the World, and that Proſpect was matter of great Gladneſs to him.

58. I aſſure you, my Being is of a Standing much longer than *Abraham*, even from all Eternity, and never had Beginning.

The GOSPEL.

S. John viii. 46.

46. *JESUS ſaid, Which of you convinceth me of ſin? And if I ſay the truth, Why do ye not believe me?*

47. *He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, becauſe ye are not of God.*

48. *Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil?*

49. *Jeſus anſwered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me.*

50. *And I ſeek not my own glory, there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth.*

51. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death.*

52. *Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou haſt a devil. Abraham is dead, and the Prophets: and thou ſayeſt, If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of Death.*

53. *Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the Prophets are dead: whom makeſt thou thy ſelf?*

54. *Jeſus anſwered, If I honour my ſelf, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye ſay, That he is your God.*

55. *Yet ye have not known him, but I know him: and if I ſhould ſay, I know him not, I ſhall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying.*

56. *Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day: and he ſaw it, and was glad.*

57. *Then ſaid the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham?*

58. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

59. *Then*

59. *Then took they up Stones to caſt at him: but Jeſus hid himſelf, and went out of the temple.*

59. At this the Jews enraged, and thinking that Saying blaſphemous, were about in their Zeal to ſtone him, the Puniſhment uſual for Blaſphemy, and ſometimes by their Zealots inflicted without any formal Proceſs or Sentence of Law.

COMMENT.

AS the Death of our Bleſſed Saviour is the Spring, from whence all our Hopes and Confidences of Happineſs and Mercy flow, and the End of his Sufferings the Benefit of wretched Man; ſo the Manner of thoſe Sufferings is likewiſe adapted to our Good. And, if within theſe it be fit to comprehend, not the laſt black Scene alone, but thoſe many antecedent Paſſages of his Life, in which he *endured the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*; the Goſpel for this day may well deſerve its Place in our Liturgy. Thus the Church riſes very gradually in the Hiſtorical Part, from opprobrious Language, and a malicious, but vain, Attempt upon that Sacred Life, to that Violence, which was permitted to take Effect: In the Inſtructive part, from a Pattern of reproached and ſpighted Innocence, to One of Faithfulneſs to the very Death, and *reſiſting even unto Blood*, when God and Duty call. This I conceive the great Deſign of, this the proper Method for, improving that Scripture read in your Ears this Day. And therefore my Work ſhall be, *Firſt*, To repreſent our Saviour's Deportment upon this Occaſion; And *Then*, To inſtance in ſuch particular Virtues, deducible from thence, as would adorn our Lives, if well obſerved, when it is Our Lot to fall under the like Circumſtances.

And *Firſt*, We may, through the Management of this whole Affair, obſerve a Divine Prudence, in reſtraining at ſome Times, and expreſſing at Others, the juſt Indignation our Lord conceived, at the Malice and Obſtinacy of theſe wicked Jews. Of this we have a re-

markable Pattern in the Return made to theſe Words: *Thou art a Samaritan and haſt a Devil.* The Reproach of *Samaritan* was one of the laſt Affronts, at that time capable of being paſſed upon any Man. It ſpoke him Idolater, and Schiſmatick, and, according to the Terms That People then ſtood upon with the Jews, every thing that was odious and deſpicable. Yet all this is only anſwered by Silence, as not worthy our Lord's Notice. But the Other part of *having a Devil* would draw down Scandal upon his Doctrine, and weaken the Authority of his Preaching. And therefore This was fit, nay it was neceſſary, to be confuted. And upon that Point he condeſcends to reaſon with them. Hence we may learn, how to diſtinguiſh Injuries, and how we ſhould Proportion our Reſentments, according to the different Sorts and Conſequences of them. Where the Provocation is private, and terminates in our ſelves, It is a Mark of a great and Chriſtian Mind, to put it up, or ſoftly to reprove it. But where it reaches farther, and wounds deeper, Where Truth and Goodneſs are ſtruck at through our Sides, Silence is Tameneſs there. For then the Cauſe ceaſes to be our Own. God's Glory and the Good of all Mankind are concerned, in the Reſpect due to Virtue and Religion; And that, which is none of Ours, we ought not to recede from, nor can we give it up, without committing a Fault. Well were it, if this Rule were duly thought on, and punctually obſerved. Then we ſhould ſee a Stop put to Prophaneneſs, and all wicked Railleries upon Holy Things. Theſe would not, with ſuch a triumphant Boldneſs, be uttered, and eſteemed a part of Mirth and Wit in Converſation, if they were not as wickedly received and applauded. Men would not be ſo jealous of their own Reputation, and at the ſame time ſo injurious to God's, as we find them to be. They would not, for every ſmall, for every ſuppoſed Affront, require Blood, and execute a Murtherer's Vengeance; and yet ſport with the Majeſty of Hea-

ven, and his Oracles, as if Theſe were fit for nothing, but to furniſh Matter for a keen and ſaucy Jeſt; As if the Holineſs of the moſt High might be proſtituted to the moſt contumelious Uſage; while what the profligate Wretches falſely call their own Honour, muſt be ſacred and inviolable, and, like the Ark of old, not touched but upon pain of Death. So contradictious, it ſeems, are the Notions Some Men now have of contemptuous Treatment, to thoſe of our Great Maſter; So different their Deportment under it. He generouſly diſdained the Infamies levelled at Himſelf, and His unſpotted Innocence gave him the Advantage of doing it ſecurely. Others, perhaps, are the more impatient of Reproach, becauſe Guilt, and Self-condemnation give it a Sting; They feel leſs concern for the Vindicating One, whom the moſt blaſphemous Falſhoods cannot hurt, than for themſelves, whoſe Impurities are already ſo foul and black, as not to bear Freedom and bold Truths.

But, *Secondly*, Our Saviour's Example here inſtructs us alſo, how to proceed in that Defence, which God and Religion require from Us. For thoſe very things, which we may, nay which we are bound to, vindicate, are not to be vindicated after every Manner; But ſome Order, and proper Meaſures are to be obſerved, even in the moſt Lawful, the moſt neceſſary Returns, to thoſe that abuſe and traduce them. And for This, Chriſt's own Words are a Pattern ſufficient, to as many as are content to conſider, and be guided by them. *Jeſus anſwered, I have not a Devil, but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me.* Wherein he only clears himſelf from their wicked Suggeſtions, with all the Mildneſs that became his Character, and the Juſtice of his Cauſe. As in other the like Occaſions we find him returning cool Reaſon to their Rage, and barely expoſing the Abſurdity, the Impoſſibility, of their Charge againſt him; the Inconſiſtence of his Actions with their blaſphemous Thoughts; And even, when the Treachery of a Diſciple

had

had done him the laſt Injury, and given him the juſteſt Provocation, he chides his Perfidiouſneſs and Ingratitude, with this ſoft Rebuke only, *Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* So little Countenance have we from His Practice, for that Clamour and Bitterneſs, that furious and wild Paſſion, to which Men think themſelves licenſed, when their Own, or God's Cauſe has drawn them into Diſpute. The ſpightful Recriminations, the induſtrious and ſtudied Abuſes, and all the refined Arts of Railing and ridiculing, by which they endeavour to diſtinguiſh their Parts, or their Zeal, may perhaps ſerve to recommend them to an ignorant or an ill natured World: But ſurely theſe Men *know not what Spirit they are of.* They forget, that this is the Effect of Pride, and Envy, and Contention; Not any part of Chriſtianity, Not any Reſemblance of its Meek, its Divine Author; Not any Advantage to the Truth, which, in the Eſteem of good People, rather ſuffers by ſuch Indecencies, and Indiſcretions. For, it is not without ſome Difficulty, that an Argument can deliver it ſelf from the Averſions, which unbecoming Treatment, and ungoverned Paſſion raiſe againſt it. And moſt ſeaſonable, upon theſe Occaſions, is that Advice of St. *James*, *That even then, when we are ſwifteſt to ſpeak, we ſhould be ſlow to wrath*; remembring *that the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God.*

James i. 19, 20.

Thirdly; From the mention of our Saviour's Hiding himſelf in this Goſpel, we may obſerve the Lawfulneſs of avoiding Danger and Perſecution. Which is indeed ſo agreeable to the firſt and fundamental Principles of humane Nature, that it might ſeem impertinent and ridiculous to propoſe it; Were it not, that ſome eminent Patterns in Antiquity are highly celebrated, for embracing thoſe Cruelties, and encountring thoſe Difficulties, which it ſeems to have been in their power to have eſcaped: Nay and this very Saviour, who hath left us

an Example of withdrawing from his Enemies, and defeating their Attempts at Some times, did yet offer and yield himſelf up to their Malice at Another. So that the Natural reſult of all This is, That there are ſome Occaſions, in which the Dangers that threaten us may fairly be declined; and Others, wherein, without a breach of Decency and Duty, they cannot. Now, how to diſtinguiſh between theſe different Caſes, As it is of exceeding great Importance, So is it what the Example of our Saviour will do us no mighty ſervice in. For, to ſay, that we muſt follow Him, in endeavouring to reſcue our ſelves, when it is not agreeable to the purpoſe of God that we ſhould ſuffer; and We muſt bear the brunt of what he ſends upon Us, when it is his purpoſe; would be to ſay nothing. For, how ſhall we know that Purpoſe of his? Chriſt indeed, who was privy to all the Secrets of Providence, could tell diſtinctly, which was his Enemies *hour and the power of Darkneſs:* But We, who are not admitted into thoſe Myſterious Counſels, muſt content our Selves to make probable Conjectures; And, for the directing our Judgments in them, theſe *Two* Rules may be of ſome Significancy to us.

Firſt, Whatever Difficulty cannot be otherwiſe avoided, than by violating our Conſcience, That, we are to conclude, God hath called Us to ſuffer. For, what the wiſe Son of *Sirach* hath long ago obſerved, is univerſally true, That, *He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, neither hath he given any man licence to ſin.* Eccleſ. xv. 20. They are only the Ignorant, or the Unbelieving, that ſo much as put the Queſtion, Whether a known deliberate Crime be allowable for our own Preſervation. For, Who that has been taught, Who that heartily entertains the Goſpel, can make a doubt of it? Who, that hears our Saviour rating the Soul above the whole World, would think, though it were Life it ſelf, (which when rightly eſtimated, is but

the

the prolonging an uncertain Tenure for a ſhort ſpace, and that, in a ſtate of infinite Change aud Trouble) worth giving this in Exchange for? Who muſt not ſee, that an Eternity of Torments, at leaſt a manifeſt hazard of them, is too hard a Condition to cloſe with, upon any Terms? Who, that receives the Promiſes of Heaven, with any becoming Degree of Aſſurance, would grudge to keep the Favour of God, at the Expence of all this World can boaſt of, and to truſt Him for the Amends to be made in another? And if ſo, then, 'tis certain, a Willful Sin muſt not buy our preſent Eaſe and Safety. For ſuch a one is not conſiſtent with God's Favour, or a rational Hope of Eternal Happineſs. Nay not only a Sin in it ſelf, but what a Man thinks a Sin; For, though he ſhould happen to be involved in unneceſſary Niceties, Yet, ſo long as he thinks a thing Sinful, although it be not really ſuch, yet if he do it in that apprehenſion: God, who judges Men, by the Integrity of their Hearts, and not by the Perfection of their Underſtandings, will condemn that Perſon, as if it were a Sin. And ſuch it is to Him. He violates his Conſcience, who goes againſt the Dictates and preſent Light of it; He is an Offender in the Perverſeneſs of his Will, though he happen to be miſtaken in the Determination of his Judgment. This therefore is the firſt Rule; *Do nothing, which your Conſcience tells you ought not to be done. And If there be no other Choice left, but Sinning or Suffering; you may be confident, that He who never commanded any Man to Sin; hath, in thoſe Circumſtances, commanded every Man to Suffer.*

Secondly, The Other Rule is, That a Man may uſe all Lawful means for his own Preſervation; and, where the regular uſe of theſe is Succeſsful, that may be accounted a Caſe, in which he was no way bound to Suffer. For inſtance: If, in a Controverted Point, one uſes the beſt means he can of informing himſelf, and, after diligent Enquiry, and honeſt impartial Judging, he

proceeds

proceeds with the Teſtimony of his own Breaſt; this Man is either right in his Opinion, or under ſuch a Miſtake, as ſhall never be imputed to him for a Crime And therefore, whatever Advantages of Safety ſuch a Proceeding can give, he is fairly entituled to take the Benefit of them. So again; A Man may make the beſt Terms he can for himſelf, with thoſe that oppreſs or deſtroy him; provided he act without Fraud, and break none of thoſe Reſtraints, which the Laws of God, or of Civil Society, have bound him up to. He may ſtrive to deliver himſelf in diſtreſs; He may pray to God to deliver him; But Both theſe muſt be done with a reſign'd Spirit. And when we beg, with Chriſt; *That if it be poſſible this Cup may be taken from Us*, we muſt beg it, and we muſt endeavour it, with His Reſervation too, *Neverthleſs not Ours, but our heavenly Father's Will be done.* This Submiſſion is highly neceſſary; Not only as it agrees with the Condition of Sons, and Servants, and Creatures; but as it may encline the favour of God to our Relief. For, Why ſhould we not ſuppoſe, that He will proceed by the Rules, which Love, Honour, and the pureſt Reaſon, have fix'd among Men? That he will think it becoming his Goodneſs, to take thoſe into his more peculiar Care and Protection, who are content to depend upon his pleaſure, and reſign all their Affairs entirely up to his Wiſe and Gracious Diſpoſals? Hence it is, that to Lawful means I add a Regular uſe of thoſe means; becauſe Anxious and Inordinate Deſires, do draw down, I doubt not, many Sufferings and Misfortunes, which would not otherwiſe have befallen Men. And Theſe, properly ſpeaking, are Troubles, not of God's creating, but their own.

Again; when I ſay, A Man may uſe all Lawful means; I do not ſay, that he is always bound to do it. There may be ſome Inſtances, wherein the Chriſtian Gallantry is concerned to diſtinguiſh it ſelf. And Heroes there have

have been, who, when they might have had it, would *not accept Deliverance*; but have acquir'd to themſelves a juſt and immortal Renown, for devoting their Lives to the Service of Religion. But this is a point of Perfection; And muſt be left to Wiſdom, and a due conſideration of Circumſtances to pronounce of. We may ſay of it, as our Lord did of them that make themſelves *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's Sake, He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.* There may be Caſes, when all the ſafe Methods of Preſervation may be neglected; but He, that ſeeks and uſes them, ſins not in ſo doing. If God gives not ſucceſs, then he is to ſit down, and not doubt his Mercy, and a future Reward: For that defeating his Prayers and Endeavours ſo far is a plain and loud Call to Suffer. But, He, who in Bravery is more liberal of himſelf, muſt be well adviſed. For, as Men may not be too Tenacious, ſo neither may they be too Profuſe, and Laviſh, of Life, and the Comforts of it, Leſt, beſides theſe preſent Hardſhips, they find at laſt an indiſcreet Zeal return'd, with a *Who hath required theſe things at your Hands?* Love indeed is apt and deſirous to give over-meaſure, where it can; To make up for the Defects of One kind, by double application in Another. And ſure, where God is the Object of our Love, it well becomes Us to attempt this. But ſtill, this muſt not be the effect of Paſſion alone; Prudence ſhould temper and direct it. And, where an Affliction is choſen, which with a Good Conſcience might have been avoided: As it may happen, that the making ſuch Choice ſhall be highly commendable; ſo it is certain, They ought not to be condemned, who chooſe a Lawful Safety, and therefore make it not.

Matth. xix. 12.

Fourthly; We have already conſidered Chriſt, as a Pattern of Meekneſs, in not returning opprobrious Language; let us alſo contemplate him, as an Example of not taking Revenge. When an outragious Attempt was made

made upon his Life, He ſatisfies himſelf with reſtraining their Violence, without inflicting thoſe Puniſhments, which thoſe Men's Wickedneſs deſerved. And ſo ought We to content our ſelves, with thoſe Methods, that are ſufficient for our Security; without proceeding to the utmoſt Rigour and Severity: Even with the worſt of Enemies, Even when they are in our Power, and lie at our Mercy. *It is God to whom Vengeance belongeth*, and Men do but uſurp it. But here you ſee the very Perſon, to whom it did of right belong, tender in uſing that Right, and rather chooſing to ſoften his Adverſaries Hearts, by Patience and Long-ſuffering, than to confound them, by exerting his Almighty Power. Inſtructing us hereby, what Diſpoſition They ſhould be of, who pretend to be governed by his Laws, and to live by the Copy of His Practice; That it is fit, they paſs by many and great Provocations, and enough for them to conſult their own Safety, without ſeeking the Ruine of others. And this, if it were duly conſidered, would ſet bounds to Mens Fury; and ſhew them, that, as they ought not in any caſe to do Injuries, ſo they ſhould not repay them neither in their own kind; *But ceaſe from Wrath, and let go Diſpleaſure*; for otherwiſe they will, in this Senſe too, be certainly *moved to do Evil.*

Laſtly; From this Paſſage we may be certainly aſſured, that the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt were his own free voluntary Act. The ſame Divine unſeen Force, which held the Hands of the Men of *Nazareth*, when they intended to caſt him headlong down the brow of their Hill; The ſame, which evaded the Jews preſent deſign to Stone him, was ever Ready, ever Able, to produce the ſame wonderful Effects. We know, it was ſo in the Garden particularly. And the caſting thoſe down to the Ground, who then came to Apprehend him, ought to have made them underſtand, that, if he had not thought fit to check and withdraw it, neither their

Numbers,

Numbers, nor their Weapons, could have prevailed to his Prejudice. And This ſhould enflame our Love, and our Gratitude, that the many bitter things he endured for Our ſakes, were not upon Conſtraint, but Choice: That He ſo ſignally proved the Truth of thoſe his own Words; *No Man taketh my Life from me, but I lay it down of my ſelf:* That he was barbarouſly treated, and ignominiouſly murthered, becauſe he would be ſo, and the *Will of God was fulfilled* in this point, only becauſe he was *content* and well pleaſed *to do it.* What remains then, but that, as this Holy Seaſon requires, we Meditate on this Dying Redeemer with wonder; That we repreſent his Willing Paſſion to our Souls, in all thoſe moving Circumſtances it is capable of; That we think nothing too much for Him, who was ſo liberal of Eaſe, of Reputation, of Life for Us; That we not only Adore, but Imitate, that Great Example,

1 Pet. ii. 23. who *when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not, but committed himſelf to God, that judgeth righteouſly:*

That we make not Wrongs, of any ſort, mutual, but account it our Generoſity, our Duty, to ſuffer our ſelves to be outdone, in this only Inſtance of Evil-doing. So obſerving the Apoſtle's command, not to *render Evil*

1 Pet. iii. 9. *for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwiſe Bleſſing, knowing that we are Hereunto called that we might inherit a Bleſſing.*

The Sunday next before Eaſter.

The COLLECT.

Rom. viii. 32. 1 John iv. 9, 10. Phil. ii. 5, 8. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

ALmighty and Everlaſting God, who of thy tender Love towards Mankind, haſt ſent thy only Son our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, to take upon him our Fleſh, and to ſuffer Death upon the Croſs, that all Mankind ſhould follow the Example of his great Humility;

lity; Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the Example of his Patience, and alſo be made Partakers of his Reſurrection, through the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Philip ii. 5.

PARAPHRASE.

5. *LET this mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus,*

5. With regard to the Charity, and mutual Condeſcenſions I am exhorting you to, make the Humility and wonderful Love of Jeſus Chriſt your Pattern.

6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;*

6. Who, though he was very God, and had taken to himſelf no more than belonged of right to him; in exerting all the Glory and Majeſty of the Divine Nature; yet did he not affect to appear in his native Greatneſs and Glory;

7. *But made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men;*

7. But laid all that aſide, did not diſdain to live in humane Nature, not only as Man, but as the meaneſt Servant of God, and even of Men, miniſtring to their Wants,

8. *And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs.*

8. And ſtooping ſo very low, as to die, nay to die the moſt painful and ignominious Death, in obedience to his heavenly Father's will, and for the common benefit of Mankind.

9. *Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.*

10. *That at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

11. *And that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

9, 10, 11. This unparallelled act of Obedience God hath rewarded, by advancing his humane Nature to Univerſal Dominion. That the Man Chriſt Jeſus ſhould now rule over, and be adored by all Creatures; That all Nations ſhould acknowledge this King, and, by ſubmitting to his Laws and Government, promote the Glory of God the Father; Who delights to be honoured in the Belief and Obedience, paid to his Bleſſed Son, and his Goſpel.

COMMENT.

THE good Effects, which our Church propoſes to her ſelf, from this portion of Scripture, we plainly learn, from the Collect for the Day, to be Humi-

lity, and Patience. The Former, to be expreſſed, by thinking no good Offices beneath us, whereby we may contribute to the Relief of our Brethren, in Their Sufferings; The Latter, by Contentedneſs and Conſtancy of Mind, in ſubmitting to our Own. In order to excite and eſtabliſh theſe good Diſpoſitions in us, the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, is here ſet forth as our Pattern. His Love and Condeſcenſion, for our Example; That We, ſo far as the difference of Circumſtances will allow, may not grudge to do, as He hath done before us. His Exaltation and Reward is alſo mentioned, for our Encouragement; That We may depend upon the like being done by Us in proportion, which hath already been done to Him, by way of Recompence for ſuch kind Humiliation.

To treat this Subject, as we ought, it will be requiſite to conſider, *Firſt*, What our Lord did, and how we are bound to imitate him. *Secondly*, What he received, and how this aſſures Us of being rewarded like him.

1. A juſt Senſe of what our Lord did we never can have, without right Notions concerning the Dignity of his Perſon. Which therefore the Apoſtle hath here illuſtrated, in Terms, that ſpeak him Very God, and Very Man. The *Form of God* as ſtrongly inferring the Former, as the *Likeneſs and Faſhion of Men* does the Latter; if we regard only the force of the Expreſſions themſelves. And, as the whole Courſe of his Converſation, the things he did and ſuffered, living and dying, made unconteſtable proof of the truth of his Humane Nature: So, if we will allow S. *Paul* to argue with any Conſiſtence, his Argument here overthrows the Cavils uſually objected to the Truth of his Divine Nature. For how can any taking the *likeneſs* or *faſhion* of Men deſerve to be thought an *emptying* or *humbling* of himſelf, in a Perſon who is no more than Man?

Ver. 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 7, 8.

How

How can the Government of the whole World be committed to, or adminiſtred by, a mere Man? How can Univerſal Adoration become due to ſuch a one? How can it agree with the deſign of the Chriſtian Religion, to enjoin it, which aimed ſo directly at curing Idolatrous Mankind of their Monſtrous Sin and Folly; conſiſting properly in deifying Men for their Merits, and, in that Ignorance of the One true God, *doing Service to them which by Nature are no Gods?* But eſpecially, How ſhould a Perſon deſerve and obtain Divine Honours, as a Reward for his unparallelled Humility, and Piety, and moſt exemplary Meekneſs, Who, if he were not Real God, and yet *thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, (but ſuffered himſelf to be eſteemed ſo, gave occaſion from his own Words, to be thus eſteemed, never warn'd thoſe who took the occaſion, of any Error or ill Conſequence in ſuch an Opinion) was certainly the Proudeſt and moſt Preſumptuous, the Profaneſt and moſt Deteſtable Blaſphemer? To Them therefore, who acknowledge our Lord's Divinity, S. *Paul*'s Reaſoning is juſt and very preſſing. But, to refer it to ſuch Condeſcenſions, as Waſhing his Diſciples Feet, or even the Indignities of his Paſſion, in a Man only, renders it weak and trifling. The Terms, expreſſing this voluntary Humiliation, are an empty Pomp in compariſon, and ſuch as then indeed, but only then, are full of Significance and ſound Argument; when the Perfection and Majeſty of Chriſt's Divine, and the Impotence and Vileneſs of Our Humane Nature, are underſtood, for the Height he came down from, to the Depth he deſcended to. Ver. 10. Gal. iv. 8. Phil. ii. 6.

Concerning This Condeſcenſion, how Marvellous it is in it ſelf, and how forcible an Engagement to Humility and Charity, upon all who believe and reap the benefits of it, I did endea vour tomake Men ſenſible, when the Church commemorated the Bleſſing of our

Lord *taking upon him the form of a Servant, and being made in the Likeneſs of Men.* That yet more amazing Humiliation, of *becoming obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs,* is Matter more peculiarly ſuitable to the Devotions of this Day. And to It therefore I ſhall chiefly confine my Diſcourſe.

Goſpel for *Chriſtmas-Day.*

That Crucifixion was of all Deaths the moſt Painful, the moſt Opprobrious; A Puniſhment reſerved for the Vileſt of Slaves, and the Heinouſeſt of Malefactors, I can ſcarce ſuppoſe any of my Readers Ignorant. But, if they be, the Hiſtory of our Dear Redeemer's Sufferings, ſo particularly rehearſed, ſo often repeated, in the Service of this Week, will not fail to poſſeſs them with right Apprehenſions of it. Waving therefore any farther enlargement at preſent, concerning that, which our Thoughts will, for ſome ſucceeding Days, find themſelves obliged to dwell upon; I apply my ſelf immediately to the force and fitneſs of this Example, for producing, in the Minds of all who conſider it, thoſe Two Diſpoſitions already mentioned, which the Collect hath taught us at this time moſt ſeaſonably to pray for.

1. The *Firſt* of theſe is Humility. Which, it is evident, no Perſon, no Inſtance, no Action, ever had, ever could have, ſo direct a tendency to promote. Well therefore might this Saviour invite Men to *learn* of Him, as being *Meek and Lowly*; ſince none was ever by Nature ſo Exalted, none by Choice ſo Abaſed: None could ſo empty himſelf of Glory and Power as He had done; Even though his Appearance upon Earth had been made in all the Riches and Splendour of the greateſt Monarch, that ever the World knew. But, to render his Goodneſs ſtill more aſtoniſhing, He *came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter:* Thought the *giving of his own Life a Ranſom,* an Office not too

Matth. xi. 29.

Matth. xx. 28.

kind;

kind; and doing this in the quality of a Servant and a Criminal, a Character not too mean, for the sake of doing Good.

The most fatal, and perhaps the Corruption that sticks closest to our Nature, is Pride. Fit therefore, above all others, to be particularly countermined, and quite beat out of countenance, by Him, who came into the World, on purpose to correct our Corruptions, and to renew our Nature. This Vice consists in undue Exaltations of our selves, and, in consequence of these, Disdain and Contempt of Others. But, Who are those Selves? Who those Others? Lost and Undone Wretches all; Lost and Undone by the Pride of the First; and so must have continued to Eternity, if not rescued by the Humility of the Second, *Adam*. Do We then insist upon Points and Niceties of Respect, upon Place and Precedence, with the utmost rigour, and cast away our own, or invade another's Life (Murderers in both) upon the very jealousie of an Affront? Do We neglect our poorer, or in any respect meaner Brethren, behold their Miseries with Indifference, hold them so far unworthy our Pains, or Cost, or personal good Offices, as scarcely to allow them Pity or Regard? Nay but, O Man! Look upon the Blessed *Jesus*. See the King of Heaven, making himself of no Reputation, eating with the Traitor, admitting his unfaithful Kiss, mute before his Judges, crucified with Thieves. And all for Them, whom Thou pursuest with Revenge, or passest over with Disdain. For Thee, who thus reproachest the Mercy by which thou art Redeemed, the Lord that thus Redeemed thee. Compare the Indignities He submitted to; His unbounded Charity, with thy Angry Resentments, Scornful Meen, and Hard-hearted Coldness; and thou wilt soon perceive, that the Pride, the Cruelty, the Unconcernedness, which in any Man is Wicked, in the Disciples of a Crucified Master, is perfectly Absurd; A Contradiction to the Name of Chri-

ſtian, while thou wilt not let *the ſame Mind be in Thee, which was in Chriſt Jeſus.* 'Tis true indeed, He hath far exceeded all that is poſſible for us to imitate. But the leſs proportion the utmoſt we can do bears to His amazing Condeſcenſion for our ſakes, the more muſt They, for whom he ſtooped ſo low, if they think any thing too much for Them, for whom he likewiſe ſtoop'd ſo low, find their own Narrowneſs of Spirit, and too delicate Diſtinctions, (where there is ſo little ground for ſuch) reproached and condemned. And well it were, if They would ſeriouſly reflect, that this Saviour is one Day to be their Judge; if they would ask themſelves, how they ſhall then be able to ſtand before Him, *Who though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled himſelf to the form of a ſervant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs.*

2. The other Virtue, I would recommend, is *Patience.* Eaſie to be attained, when that, Laſt mentioned, hath opened the way to it. For it is Pride eſpecially, that diſpoſes us to be Angry and Revengeful, Fretful and Querulous, Uneaſie with our Fortunes, and Unthankful to Providence. Againſt all which evil Diſeaſes of the Mind, what Antidote more proper, more powerful can we think of, than the Example of the Meek-ſuffering Jeſus? If our Quiet be diſturbed, our Poſſeſſions invaded, our Perſons inſulted, our Reputation aſperſed, by the Malice of unreaſonable wicked Men; Let us remember the perpetual Vexations, the Injuries and Affronts, the Lies and Contradictions of Sinners againſt himſelf, which, through the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, he endured; but which, in the Tragical Scene this Week preſents us with, were Outrageous beyond any compariſon. If Poverty or Friendleſs Trouble be our Grievance; This reſembles us but more to that Son of God, who for our ſakes became Poor, ſubſiſted on the pious Bounty of his Hearers and Attendants; but in the

Hour of his Enemies, and approach of Danger, was Betrayed by One, Denied by Another, and Forſaken by All his Diſciples. If Pain, or Sickneſs tempt us to Repine; what Gout, what Stone, what Melancholy, can be more Afflicting, than the Tortures He went through, the acute Pangs of his dolorous Crucifixion, and the cutting Sorrows, that wounded his Soul even unto death? So far are our moſt ſenſible Afflictions ſhort of that weight of Sorrow, with which it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe this Son of his Love, in the Day of his fierce Anger. But, could we ſuppoſe them equal, yet, doth not This make a mighty difference, and ought it not to compoſe our Spirits to Submiſſion, that His Obedience was an act perfectly free, His Sufferings choſen, for Ours, and not his own Benefit? But We, alas! as Creatures, are entirely at the mercy of our common Maſter, and Maker: As Sinners, bound to acknowledge the Righteouſneſs of God in all that is come upon us: To lay our Mouths in the Duſt, and recollect, with the Penitent Thief, that *We indeed are juſtly under the ſame condemnation*; for This *Man* did *nothing amiſs*, but all that We receive, and a great deal more, God knows, than we can receive in this World, is but *the due Reward of his evil Deeds.* And doth *a Man complain for the Puniſhment of his Sin?* Can Impatience, and Diſcontent, and Hard Accuſations of that Providence, which diſpoſes all Events, become One, who in the courſe of Juſtice, hath brought Miſery upon himſelf, by his own Fault? Can He murmur at this, which he ſuffers as a Principal, when ſo much more was laid upon a Proxy? An innocent and infinitely better Proxy? Eſpecially too, when the Wiſdom and Goodneſs, no leſs than the Juſtice of God, have their part in every ſuch Diſpenſation? For, as our Bleſſed Maſter was in the bearing; ſo is he likewiſe a Pattern in the Reward, of our Afflictions. And, in that regard, the Epiſtle for the Day does likewiſe call upon

Luke xxiii.

us, to contemplate him in his Exaltation: And therefore I proceed now to explain very briefly, in the

II. *Second* place, What our Lord received, in recompence of his Humility and Patience, and How this assures Us of being rewarded like him.

I. Of our Lord's Recompence we have an account in the 9th, 10th, and 11th Verses: Which acquaint us, that it consisted in an exceeding high Exaltation of him, far above any the most excellent Creatures; in making him the Sovereign Ruler of the whole World; in giving him a Title to the humblest Adoration; and in the Publication of his Gospel, and his Glories, over the face of the whole Earth.

But, in what respect and capacity these Honours were conferred on Christ, is the main Point to be attended to, in the Case now under Consideration. As God, they could not be conferred: For his Glory, in this regard, was perfect before. He could not thus receive any Reward, any Increase of Honour. That supreme and absolute Dominion was inherent and essential to him, That universal Adoration was his strict due, from all Eternity. Whatever Addition he was capable of, he must be capable of, as Man: The Elevation of his Humane Nature is therefore the thing intended by the Apostle. In this Nature it was, that He Obeyed, and Merited, and Suffered; In This, consequently, he was Rewarded and Exalted. And a marvellous Exaltation it is, to place Humane Nature upon the Throne of God; to subject to This, Angels, and Principalities, and Powers, Men and Devils, all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the Earth. A suitable Reward, to that Nature, which suffered such Indignities and Pains, for all the barbarous Treatment, and bitter Torments it endured here below, to shine so Bright, and partake in all the Majesty of the Son of God. Who, by uniting it inseparably to his own Person, and thus vouchsafing to take part in its Infirmities and Sufferings; entituled

this

this Humane, now his Own likewiſe, to a ſhare in all the Bliſs and Glories of that Divine Nature, which was originally and always his own. So that He is not any more, as formerly he was, the Governour of the World, and the Object of Mens Worſhip, as God only, but as God and Man both. Than which nothing could more effectually conduce to *the Glory of his Father*; Becauſe nothing could more illuſtrate his Juſtice, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs; nothing more undeniably demonſtrate the Acceptance and Efficacy of that Redemption; So admirably contrived, for aboliſhing the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin, and retrieving the Immortality and Happineſs of Mankind.

2. For, *Secondly*, This method of dealing with our Lord gives us all imaginable aſſurance, that They, who conform themſelves to His Virtues, ſhall be proportionably conformed to Him, in the Reward of them. The Reaſon is, becauſe, in all he did and ſuffered for the Salvation of Men, And ſo again, in all he received, by way of Recompence for thoſe Actions and Sufferings, he acted not in any ſeparate and perſonal Capacity, but all along ſuſtained a publick Character. This Character is a conſequence of his Incarnation, the bleſſed Effects whereof turn all upon This; That the Son of God tranſacted the whole Affair of our Redemption, in the Form and Nature of thoſe he came to Redeem. Had he therefore, at his entrance into the World, united himſelf to any One Man's Perſon, the Influence and Benefit accruing from ſuch Union, muſt have been of extent, equal to that of the Union. That ſingle Perſon, I mean, to whom he was united, and No other, could have been Redeemed by it. But now our Bleſſed Saviour, when he became Man, cloathed himſelf with a Body, formed in the Womb of the Virgin, by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt. His Perſon was ſtill Divine, and the ſame it ever had been. Only he united to it, and exhibited himſelf in, our Fleſh, after a manner altogether

together extraordinary and miraculous. This was a taking upon him humane Nature, and rendred him the common Representative of all Mankind. In this is founded the Title, given him by this Apostle, of *the*
1 Cor. xv. *Second Adam*. For, as all Humane Nature was included in Him, who himself descended from none, and from whom all descended: So was all Humane Nature made anew, as it were, in Him, whose Humane Body and Soul were as immediate a Work of God, as that, whereby our first Parents Body was formed
Gen. i. 11. *out of the Dust of the Ground*, and animated with *the Breath of Life*. As therefore all Mankind did virtually sin and die in *Adam*, because the whole Humane Nature was then in Him; so are all Mankind virtually Righteous and restored to Life in Christ; because he took Humane Nature at large; and what he did, and suffered, and received in that Nature, are the Acts, and Sufferings, and Rewards of Humane Nature. Consequently All, who partake of this Nature, are not only certain of, but may in some Sense be said already vested in, the Happiness, which Humane Nature in Him, by already possessing, secures their common Right to. And thus far All shall certainly partake of it. Death was the Punishment of Sin, This is done away as effectually by the *Second*, as it had been introduced by the *First Adam*. Their Bodies and Souls both shall be restored to Life, and live for ever. But the Forgiveness of Sins, and the Happiness of Heaven, are promised upon certain Conditions. And therefore, though All shall be immortal, yet only They, who perform the Conditions of the Gospel, shall be happy in that Immortality.

And This shews us at once the Necessity, and the Encouragement we all have, to imitate the Virtues, for which our Lord was so conspicuous. The Necessity, because nothing less than a Likeness to his Excellencies can advance us to a Likeness of that Bliss, which rewarded

warded them. The Encouragement, becauſe he is entred into Heaven, not for Himſelf, but Us: The Pledge of our Immortality and Glory, by our Nature being already immortalized and Glorified. Let us not then think any thing too much to do, or to endure, for our Duty, and the Good of Souls; ſince, where the *Sufferings of Chriſt abound, his Conſolations will much more abound.* Let us read, and hear, and meditate on, the Scriptures commended to our Thoughts this Week, with Minds diſpoſed to form themſelves upon the Model here before us. Obſerving carefully the Intereſt we have in them, and perfectly ſatisfied, That, by Virtue of that Union, which He in great Humility hath been pleaſed to make, the Sufferings and the Rewards of Chriſt's Humane Nature, ſo far belong to Us, and all Mankind; that all, *who follow the Example of his Patience,* *ſhall* undoubtedly *be Partakers of his Reſurrection.* Which He of his Infinite Mercy grant, *who was dead and is alive again,* and *liveth for evermore, and hath the Keys of Death and Hell:* To whom with the Father, and Holy Spirit, Three Perſons and One God, be all Honour and Glory, Power, Praiſe and Dominion, World without end, *Amen.*

Collect.

Rev. i. 18.

The GOSPEL.

Matth. xxvii. 1.

1. *WHen the morning was come, all the chief Prieſts and Elders of the people took counſel againſt Jeſus to put him to death.*

2. *And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governour.*

3. *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief Prieſts and Elders,*

4. *Saying, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they ſaid, What is that to us? ſee thou to that.*

5. *And he caſt down the pieces of ſilver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himſelf.*

6. *And*

6. And the chief Priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potters field, to bury strangers in.

8. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood unto this day.

9. (Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value:

10. And they gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me.)

11. And Jesus stood before the governour, and the governour asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

12. And when he was accused of the chief Priests and Elders, he answered nothing.

13. Then saith Pilate unto him, Heareſt thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14. And he answered him to never a word: insomuch that the governour marvelled greatly.

15. Now at that feast the governour was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16. And they had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas.

17. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ?

18. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him.

20. But the chief Priests and Elders perswaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21. The governour answered, and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all said unto him, Let him be crucified.

23. And the governour said, Why? what evil hath he done? But they cryed out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

25. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us and on our children.

26. Then released he Barabbas unto them, and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

27. Then the soldiers of the governour took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

28. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews.

30. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31. And after they had mocked him, they took the robe from off him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucifie him.

32. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

33. And

33. *And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,*

34. *They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.*

35. *And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*

36. *And sitting down, they watched him there:*

37. *And set over his head his accusation, written,* THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38. *Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.*

39. *And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads,*

40. *And saying, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save thy self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

41. *Likewise also the chief Priests mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders, said,*

42. *He saved others, himself he cannot save: If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*

43. *He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.*

44. *The thieves also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

45. *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.*

46. *And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying,* Eli Eli, lama sabachthani, *that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

47. *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.*

48. *And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.*

49. *The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.*

50. *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

51. *And behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent,*

52. *And the graves were opened, and many bodies of Saints which slept, arose,*

53. *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

54. *Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

The Gospels, for this and the following Days of the Week, being very long, and altogether Historical; and best understood by comparing with the Parallel Places in the other Evangelists; (all which are read in the Course of the Week) It is thought not necessary, to swell this Volume with particular Paraphrases upon them.

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

THough Almighty God was pleaſed to permit, that his Bleſſed Son ſhould ſuffer all the Scandal and Puniſhment, due to the moſt heinous Malefactors; Yet did his Wiſdom order Matters ſo, that all poſſible Right ſhould be done to his Innocence. To this Purpoſe we read ſuch Teſtimonies given of it, as, if the Jews had not been blinded by the Obſtinacy of their own inveterate Malice and Rage, were abundantly full and clear enough, to have convinced his bittereſt Enemies, that they did very wickedly, in treating him ſo ignominiouſly, ſo barbarouſly. He was acquitted in the moſt ſolemn and publick Manner, by *Herod* and *Pilate*. All the Evidence, the Jews laboured to pick up and ſuborn againſt him, was acknowledged, either inſufficient, or inconſiſtent. Nay, even the wicked Inſtrument of delivering him up into the Hands of them that ſought his Life, enraged at their implacable and Blood-thirſty Proceedings, relented, deſired to retract his Bargain, openly confeſſed his own Guilt, and the unblemiſh'd Holineſs of his injured Maſter. For, finding that the High Prieſts had declared him guilty of Blaſphemy, and delivered him over to the Power of the *Roman* Governor, Even This wretched Man was touched with a Compaſſion of his Caſe, and applied himſelf to the Jewiſh Rulers, to prevent farther Miſchief. *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty Pieces of Silver to the Chief Prieſts, and Elders, ſaying, I have ſinned in that I have betrayed the Innocent Blood.*

This is the firſt remarkable Paſſage in the Goſpel for this Day. And my Deſign is, to enquire into the Nature of *Judas* his Repentance, as we find it here deſcribed; to ſhew, what Qualifications it had, and wherein it was defective. And afterwards, to make ſuch Col-

lections

lections from hence, as the Circumstances of that wretched Man, and the foregoing Particulars, minister occasion for.

I. *First*, I shall enquire into the Nature of *Judas* his Repentance, and Then, what Qualifications it had, and wherein it was defective. For, that it was defective in the main, I suppose there need no other Proofs, than such as offer themselves, from what our Saviour himself spoke concerning him. *Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, save the Son of Perdition.* And again, *The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him, but woe unto that Man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed, it had been better for that Man if he had never been born.* Now, how these things could be true of *Judas*, if his Repentance had been such, as was available for procuring Pardon and Salvation; is not possible to comprehend. He surely is not lost, whom true Repentance recovers; Nor had it been good for that Man never to have been born, who is saved at last, though at the Expence of never so painful and laborious a Repentance. And therefore, since no one Truth in the Gospel is more express than This, that all, who truly repent, shall most certainly be saved; It must follow, that the Person, of whom those dreadful things are pronounced, did not truly and effectually repent.

John xvii. 12. Mat. xxvii. 24.

The Evangelist, indeed tells us, that he *repented himself*; and I am well content to lay no particular Stress upon the Original Word μεταμεληθεὶς here. It being sufficiently notorious, to any attentive Reader, that μεταμέλεια and μετάνοια are promiscuously used in Scripture. Which renders any Distinctions, from the Manner of Expression, of very little or no Force, in the Case before us. But then it is no less evident, that, by Mens *repenting*, is not every where intended a Change of Heart and Life; Not the Whole of that, which Repentance strictly signifies, when made the Condition of Pardon and Salvation; but only some part or imperfect Degree of It. And thus

we are to take it here. Not that *Judas* was a thorough Penitent, and became a new Man; but that he did ſomething neceſſary to be done, in order to our becoming new Men. He felt ſome remorſe for what he had done; He wiſhed he had not done it at all. This is one of the firſt Steps, which all Penitents ſet out with: It is the Beginning, but very far from the Perfection, of Repentance. And yet This is all, which that Expreſſion ſeems to import; And therefore no Argument can be formed from hence, to prove the Truth and Validity of his Repentance, properly ſo called. The moſt that can be made of it, is This; that ſomewhat he did towards it, but not enough to bring it to due Perfection. And therefore it is, that I purpoſe to conſider, ſo far as this Paſſage will guide us in this Matter, how far he advanced, and how far he fell ſhort.

1. Now *Firſt*, One good Step towards Repentance was, That *Judas*, as I ſaid, expreſt great Sorrow for what he had done, and condemned himſelf ſeverely for his wicked Treachery. This is uſually the Beginning of Reformation, to be ſenſible of one's Miſery, and ſorely afflicted for it. But then we are to look at the Motives, which ſtir that Paſſion and Remorſe in an Offender's Breaſt. Few People are ſo deſperately hardned, as not to be ſtruck with Terror, when they ſee the wretched Conſequences of their Sins. And Fear and Suffering are Arguments, which oftentimes lay hold on thoſe, who ſeem loſt to all Arguments beſides. Many are ſo profligate, as to have out-grown all Impreſſions of Ingenuity and Shame; But we cannot continue to be Men, and remain unconcerned for our own Intereſt and Safety, when once made ſenſible of it. Now, though theſe are Conſiderations, which are commonly the firſt in hardned and habitual Sinners, and capable of being improved, from a Natural, to a Godly Sorrow; Yet, where this is the Main, or the Only Argument of our Remorſe, I am afraid, it is not ſufficient to work *Repentance to Salva-*

tion not to be repented of. For otherwiſe, we do not hate the Fault, but the Puniſhment. Nor are our Diſpoſitions changed one whit, or our Love of God at all increaſed by it. And ſuch ſeems to have been the Sorrow of *Judas*. He found Matters grown to a deſperate Height, that there was no probable Appearance of *Jeſus* eſcaping the Malice of the Jews; He recollected, it is likely, the Predictions of our Lord, concerning the dreadful Vengeance, which ſhould overtake the Perſon that betrayed him to Death. Theſe, and probably many Other, dreadful Reflections working together, with all that Confuſion, which Fear and Guilt uſe to create in Mens Minds, ſeem to have made up that Concern, which the Text hath expreſt by *Repenting himſelf*. A Concern, reſulting from a Principle of Self-preſervation, in the moſt carnal Notion of the Thing. But we find not any due Senſe of the Villany of the Fact, and condemning himſelf as the baſeſt, the moſt ungrateful, the moſt abandoned Wretch alive; One, that had violated the Laws of God, and Society, and Nature, and caſt all Fidelity, and Gratitude, and common Humanity, behind his Back. All which, and a great deal more, were not only Aggravations, due to his Crime, but the very propereſt Occaſions of Remorſe; And ſuch, as till he came to be very tenderly touched for, and deeply wounded with, he was not capable of arriving at the true Contrition of a ſincere Penitent.

2. *Secondly*, Another Advance towards Repentance was, *Judas* bringing back the Thirty Pieces of Silver, for which he had ſold his Maſter's Life. And This is likewiſe neceſſary, that Men, who have offended for Profit, ſhould not ſuffer the Wages of Iniquity to ſtick to their Fingers; but diſgorge all their polluted Gains, and make Reſtitution to the utmoſt of their Power. For God will accept no Man's Sorrow, who is ſtill pleaſed with the Rewards of his Injuſtice; and holds the Wealth

faſt, while he pretends to abhor the Guilt that procured it. So that it is the vaineſt thing in the World, to hope to be accepted, or to obtain a Pardon of thoſe indirect Dealings, by which Men have enriched themſelves; without making Satisfaction for the Wrongs they have done, and ſhewing, that they do in good earneſt deteſt their Frauds and Oppreſſions, by giving up freely and entirely the Products, which theſe have injuriouſly extorted. It is not a Profeſſion of Sorrow, or a Charitable Legacy, upon a Death-Bed, which will ſerve the turn. The Altar will not ſanctify the Gift, or the Giver. If Men think to compound the Matter with God, by making over to Him a Part; This will never enſure their Souls, if, in the mean while, they Build their Houſes in Blood; if they tranſmit plentiful Eſtates to their Heirs, or raiſe their Families by that Increaſe of Subſtance, which was purchaſed by grinding the Face of the Poor, or cruſhing the Innocent, who have a rightful Title to what They, or their Poſterity enjoy. This is Doctrine, it may be, hard of Digeſtion to the Great and Greedy. And the parting with the Fruits of their Wickedneſs is a ſevere Saying, which they cannot endure to hear of. So far did *Judas* outdo too many in his Repentance. And, if He, notwithſtanding, periſhed in his Iniquity, what Hopes can They have of Forgiveneſs, who refuſe to come up to his Example in this Particular? He found not Grace, though he ſought it with Reſtitution: And yet They flatter themſelves in their Hypocriſy, without it. But alas! The Tears of the Oppreſſed and Injured will move Compaſſion above, when thoſe of the diſſembling Penitent will be rejected with diſdain. And, be aſſured, Repentance is but diſſembled, till the Spoils of Deceit are caſt away far from you, and all unrighteous acquiſitions put into their true and proper Channel again.

3. *Thirdly*, Here is alſo a farther Progreſs toward Repentance, in that publick and free Con-

Ver. 4. feſſion, *I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed*

trayed the Innocent Blood. By which, *Judas* did not only take the Shame of his Fault upon himſelf, but, in ſome Degree, make Satisfaction to his injured Maſter. Men might be apt to ſuſpect, that, how fair an Appearance ſoever *Jeſus* made to the World, yet, had there not been ſomething of private Blame, which one ſo intimately well acquainted with him, as *Judas* muſt be, was conſcious of; A Diſciple, a Friend, a conſtant Companion, One that had been taught and ſuſtained by him, could never have entertained ſo Inhumanely treacherous a Thought, as to give him up into the Hands of his Enemies, that thirſted for his Blood. But now all the Ground of theſe Jealouſies was taken away, by the Traitor's own Teſtimonies of Remorſe, and open Declaration of his Lord's unblemiſhed Innocence. And This would not only vindicate him to the reſt of the World, and preſerve his Honour unſtained to all Poſterity; But it ought likewiſe to have brought over thoſe wicked Accomplices, and have diverted the Jewiſh Rulers from their Purpoſe of murthering ſo Holy a Perſon. For, after ſuch an Evidence, They were more inflexibly wicked, than even *Judas* himſelf, in purſuing their Malice to this Perſon's Deſtruction.

Now here again *Judas* far outſtripped too many Pretenders to Repentance. Men are, it may be, well enough content to acknowledge their Guilt between God and their own Conſciences; but hardly to be prevailed upon ſo far, as to make an open Confeſſion of their Crimes, or do publick Juſtice to thoſe, whoſe Rights or Reputations they have injured. There is a ſort of preposterous Modeſty, which cannot bear the Reproaches of Other Men, at the ſame time that it hath little or no Apprehenſions of the Condemnation of one's own Mind; And is much more afraid, that the World ſhould know one hath done amiſs, than that God, the Judge of all the World ſhould know it. Whereas, in Truth, this taking of Shame to our ſelves is much more neceſſary, in order

to Reſtitution and Satisfaction for any Wrong done to our Brethren, than any private Confeſſions to God can poſſibly be. For, as we cannot hide our Injuſtice from Him, ſo neither can They, whom we have injured, ſuffer in His Eſteem. And therefore no Acknowledgments of our Faults are ſufficient, but ſuch as make Them Reparation: Such, as may be effectual to the correcting any miſtaken Imputations, in thoſe, whom our unrighteous Proceedings have led into Miſtakes; and lay the Blame, where of right it ought to lie: That is, upon the Offender himſelf, by his own frank and free Confeſſion of his Fault, and clearing the Innocent; by making the Acknowledgment, the Sorrow, and the Reproach of having done amiſs, as ſolemn, and as generally known, if it be poſſible, as ever the Injury, or the Aſperſion had been. Thus only can we prevent that yet more to be dreaded Publication of our Crimes, which, whether we will or no, ſhall be made before Angels and all Mankind, at the laſt terrible Day of Account, when God ſhall bring the whole World to Judgment, and detect all the hidden things of Diſhoneſty.

Some indeed there are, who have taken Pains to ſhew, that, even in Theſe Two Inſtances laſt mentioned, *Judas* had by no means done all that became him; In regard he made no Reſtitution, or Confeſſion to our Lord, who was the injured Party; but only to the Jewiſh Rulers, his Partners and Companions in Wickedneſs. But it were heartily to be wiſhed, that the Generality of wicked Perſons would be perſuaded to keep him Company thus far, and go the ſame Lengths that He did.

They might, upon Theſe Conditions, entertain much more reaſonable Hopes of attaining to Another, no leſs neceſſary, Qualification of Repentance, in which His was manifeſtly wanting. And That is, an humble, but ſtedfaſt, Faith in the Mercy of God, and a Dependence upon that Sacrifice of his Son, which is available for the

Forgive-

Forgiveneſs even of the chief of Sinners, provided they be believing and returning Sinners.

Now here was *Judas* his Downfall; That the Horror of his Guilt threw him into Amazement, and Confuſion, and Deſpair; and kept him from applying the proper, the only Remedy, that could have any Effect for his Recovery. For, Whether we underſtand the Account given us of his Death here, and in the *Firſt* of the *Acts*, of laying violent Hands upon himſelf, or whether of a Suffocation by extreme Melancholy; Either Senſe implies intolerable Agonies, and fruitleſs Remorſe, a fearful Expectation of Divine Vengeance, and a Diſtruſt of Mercy for ſo black a Villany.

Here then, I conceive, lay the main Defect of *Judas* his Repentance. And then we cannot be at a Loſs for a ſubſtantial Reaſon, why it met with no better Succeſs. For Repentance does not barely conſiſt in Sorrow for Sin; but in ſuch a Sorrow, as is tempered and ſupported with Hope: Not in a mere Confeſſion of Sin, but in ſuch a one, as truſts to be forgiven for Sins confeſs'd. It imports a Change of Manners; But if there be not firſt a ſtrong Perſuaſion, that our ſincere Endeavours for the future will be kindly received, and our former Tranſgreſſions graciouſly paſs'd over; All Ground and Encouragement for ſuch a Change is utterly taken away. It requires, that we chooſe new Objects for our Affections, draw them off from the World and its treacherous Allurements, from the Fleſh, and its Luſts; and ſettle them upon God and Heavenly Things. But He, who loves God, muſt of neceſſity conſider him, under ſome other Characters, than thoſe of a ſtern Judge and implacable Avenger. He muſt have ſome Notions of his Goodneſs; Both of That, which is eſſential to the Perfection of his own Nature, and of That, which infers a Diſpoſition, to be good and gracious, tender and compaſſionate to Him in particular. For, nothing but Good is, or can poſſibly be, the Motive of

our Love. And, if We have no Perſuaſion of that Good, it is, as to all Effect upon Us, as if it were not at all. For every thing works upon the Paſſions of Men, not according to what it is in its own Nature, but in proportion to what they apprehend concerning it. And therefore no Man can fix his Affections on Heaven and Heavenly Joys, who hath no Proſpect, no Hope, of ever having any Part or Place There. 'Tis true indeed, Reaſon will not lead us to infer, that Sorrow for the paſt, or Amendment for the time to come, can be any Equivalent Satisfaction for our Offences. But Revelation hath aſſured us, that God may be appeaſed, and it hath told us how he is appeaſed: Even by the precious Blood of that Son, who came to give his Life a Ranſom for many. God hath declared himſelf ſo fully in this Matter, that the very Heinouſneſs of our Sins is not a greater Provocation, than the Deſpairing of Mercy, after we have committed them. For that Diſtruſt does, in Effect, and by neceſſary Interpretation, make God a Lyar, and diſparage the Merits of Chriſt's Sacrifice. It plainly argues, that we think God will not be ſo good as his Word; And, that there are ſome Offences ſo horrid, that the Sufferings of his Son cannot be a ſufficient Compenſation for them. Thus Hope of Mercy, and Faith in the Promiſes and Satisfaction of Chriſt, are the very Life and Spirit of true Repentance. So eſſential, and indiſpenſably requiſite to quicken and recommend every part of it. And, conſequently, ſo ineffectual muſt *Judas* his Repentance needs have been, which was deſtitute of theſe neceſſary Qualifications.

If it be enquired, how *Judas* came to be wanting in this Point; The immediate Cauſe, no Queſtion, was, that God had forſaken, and withdrawn his Grace from him. But then, if we purſue this Enquiry ſtill farther, and drive it up to its true Head; The Matter will fall at laſt upon *Judas* himſelf, as the proper and original Cauſe of his own Miſery and Deſtruction. For, never

was

was there any Inſtance, of Grace more obſtinately reſiſted and abuſed; Of Advantages, and Knowledge to do better, caſt behind One's Back; Of preſumptuous and inflexible Reſolutions to do wickedly; Of Reproofs and timely Warnings loſt upon a hardened Wretch; than we may obſerve in the Caſe before us. Then was the Seaſon of Grace; And Means and Opportunities were not wanting, for deſiſting from his Villanous Enterprize. 'Tis true, the Devil is ſaid to *have entered into Judas*. Which ſignifies, no Queſtion, a more than ordinary Influence and Power over him. But we ſhall do well to take Notice, that this is not affirmed of Him, or of any other Perſon in Scripture, till we are firſt informed of ſome very grievous, and often repeated, Impieties, which have provoked God to give them over to their own Perverſeneſs. When the Spirit of the Lord is driven away, then, and not before, the evil Spirit enters and takes Poſſeſſion. Then he permits the Tempter to have his full Scope at them, by taking off thoſe Aſſiſtances and Reſtraints, which before were afforded, as a Check to their Luſts, and a Controul to his Temptations; And then God denies them the Helps of his preventing and Strengthening Grace, which they have ſo long reſiſted and defeated.

II. I have now done with the *Firſt* Head I propoſed, and, from the Conſideration of *Judas* his Repentance, proceed to make ſuch Inferences from it, as are ſuitable to this Subject.

1. And *Firſt*, Let me moſt earneſtly exhort and intreat all that read this Paſſage, to conſider the mighty Danger, and diſmal Conſequences, of known and wilful Sins, before it be too late to prevent, or to remedy them. One very ſucceſsful Artifice, made uſe of by the Devil for our Deſtruction, is to dreſs up his Temptations to ſuch Advantage, that all the Profit, all the Pleaſure, all we propoſe to our ſelves, as our End in Sinning, ſhall be ſet in its Beſt Light, and appear in Proportions

larger than the Life; But all the Difficulty, all the Danger, the Troubles and ill Effects of it, ſhall be infinitely leſſened to, or altogether concealed from, our Sight. This Deceit is One cauſe, why we feel our Selves ſo very different Men, while we are preſſing forward, heated with Deſire, and big with falſe and flattering Expectations, from what we are, when looking back again upon the thing done, and ſtung with Reproaches and Self-condemnations. For alas! Theſe will be ſure to have their turn too; and the Devil is not wanting in his Addreſs in this Point alſo. Before the Fact, he hides all diſcouraging Circumſtances, and inſinuates, how ſmall the Fault, and how eaſie to be Forgiven. Afterwards, he ſhifts the Scene, diſtracts us with the diſmalleſt Repreſentations of our Guilt, and labours to magnifie our Crime, ſo as to be more horrid than can be Forgiven. By the Former he blows us up into Preſumption; by the Latter he ſinks us into Deſpair. And Both contribute equally to his Purpoſe of contriving our Ruine. But then, to be ſure, he hath us faſt, when we are entangled in the Snare, careleſs what we do, and verily perſuaded, that there is no poſſibility of ever getting diſengaged. The Smart of *a wounded Spirit*, even when there remain ſome hopes of a Cure, and the bitter Reflexions of a trembling true Penitent, are Grievous to be born. But no Words can expreſs the Miſery of that Man, who hath Sinned himſelf paſt Hope, and is given up to the Tortures and inſupportable Anguiſh of a condemning Conſcience.

This was directly the ſtate of *Judas*. His greedineſs of Gain blinded his Eyes, and quite diverted his Thoughts, from conſidering the horrour of his Treachery. But then that Reflexion fell upon his Mind, with this terrible back-blow; And He, that brought again the thirty pieces of Silver, would have given ten thouſand Worlds, no doubt, had he been Maſter of them, never to have yielded to this Villanous Suggeſtion. When

therefore

therefore we are assaulted by any Temptation; Let us be careful to take the thing in all its different Prospects. Let us consider betimes, not only the Baits of Pleasure, or Profit, or Greatness, which are apt to dazle the Eyes of unwary Sinners; but remember withal, that Sorrow and Death are upon the Hook, and think what we shall do in the End thereof. Think, I say, what our Condition will be, if God should abandon Us to black Thoughts, to the Agonies of Guilt and Despair; When we shall see nothing, but the dreadful looking for of terrible Indignation, when Fiends shall surround us, and Flames shall be continually flashing in our Faces, and our Hell shall be already begun upon Earth. In other Cases, our Fears are apt to be the most wild and extravagant of all other Passions, and scare us with Images, far greater and more frightful than the Life; But This is the peculiar Aggravation of a lost Sinner's unhappiness, that the Misery He lives in perpetual dread of, infinitely exceeds all the Terrors, even of his most jealous and melancholy Apprehensions. An Eternity of Torments is what no finite Imaginations can ever come up to. And as little can we form to our Selves a just Idea of the Extremity of those Torments; Which, though they were to last but for a Moment, would even thus, be more insupportable, than whole Ages of the most exquisite Misery, which Flesh and Blood is capable of enduring in this present Life.

Oh! Were we but careful to lay these things fairly before us, They, sure, would check us in our hottest and most eager Pursuits; and convince us, that no Consideration can be sufficient for the Commission of one deliberate Sin. And this is what the Example of *Judas*, may be serviceable to us in, We may Profit our Selves of it greatly, By those Fruitless Pangs of Remorse, which God rejected, when he had first been rejected by His Obstinacy; By its working a Dread of that Justice and Indignation, which will not always be intreated,

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if we out-ſtand the Seaſon of Grace; By convincing us of the Wiſdom of that Advice, which otherwiſe our own Sad Experience will confirm, when it is too late. *Flee from Sin, as from the Face of a Serpent; for, if thou comeſt too near it, it will bite thee: The Teeth thereof are as the Teeth of a Lion, ſlaying the Souls of Men. All Iniquity is as a two-edged Sword, the Wounds whereof cannot be healed.*

Eccl. xxi. 2, 3.

2. *Secondly*, The Inſtance before us ſhould be a diſcouragement, as againſt all Temptations and deliberate Offences in General, So more eſpecially againſt Covetouſneſs. 'Tis not for nothing, that our Lord hath given that very Solemn Warning in this matter particularly. *Take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs.* He knows, how apt this Vice, above all others, is to get within us, and how powerful to overthrow all regard for God and Religion. Upon this Account, when the Devil had been baffled in other Attempts, he makes this Effort upon our Bleſſed Saviour, *All theſe things will I give thee, If thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* Hence S. *Paul* tells us, that *The love of Mony is the root of all Evil; That they, who will be Rich*, that is, who reſolve, and make it their buſineſs, and ſtick at nothing, which may help them, to be ſo, *fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition.* And certainly it ought to add no ſmall weight to thoſe Teſtimonies, that the moſt deteſtable Villany, that ever was thought of under the Sun, was owing to the force of this Temptation: That the only Inſtance of a Deſpairing Sinner, left upon Record in the New Teſtament, is that of a Treacherous and Greedy *Judas*. Nor let us vainly ſuppoſe our Selves above the power of this Luſt. For, Who ſhall preſume to be ſecure, when a Friend, a Diſciple, an

Luke xii. 15.

Matth. iv. 9.

1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

Apoſtle,

Apoſtle, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, a Worker of Miracles, was yet ſeduced to Sell his Maſter and his Soul, upon ſo Sordid a Conſideration, as thirty Shekels of Silver? This ought to put us all upon our Guard. And the Fate of *Judas* ſtands, as a Monument and Eternal Admonition, to all that make *Gold their God*, and the *fine Gold their Confidence*. A Warning, not only of their Proneneſs to do Wickedly, but of the bitter Fruits of doing ſo. For God does often deal with ſuch, as he did with *Judas*. He diſturbs the Enjoyment of their ill gotten Wealth; turns their polluted Gains into their greateſt Curſe and Torment; And, inſtead of all the Advantage and Happineſs they propoſed to themſelves, leaves them nothing of their wicked Purchaſe in their Hands, but Anxiety and Anguiſh, Terrors and Diſcontent, in This World; and Everlaſting Miſery in the Next.

3. *Thirdly*, and *Laſtly*; The Example of *Judas* here inſtructs us, what falſe Meaſures thoſe Men go upon, who meaſure the Truth and Efficacy of their Repentance, by the inward Agonies and Sufferrings of their own Minds. As if God could never bring a Sinner to Heaven, any other way, than by leading him through the Regions of Hell. 'Tis true indeed, No Man repents truly, without a very ſerious and afflicting Concern for having Offended. But then This muſt be an Active and a Fruitful Sorrow. Such as produces a juſt Diſpleaſure againſt our Selves, an irreconcileable Hatred of Sin, vigorous Reſolutions, and a watchful Care, to avoid it for the future. And it is not a Slight and Superficial Sorrow, that will ſuffice for theſe Purpoſes. But, be the degree of Smart more or leſs, whatſoever worketh Repentance (that is, effectually changes our Spirit and Behaviour) is, without doubt, a *Godly Sorrow*, and Great and Painful enough. Let us then try our Sorrow by theſe Marks, and judge of the Degree by the Effects; for this Rule can never deceive us. But,

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to measure its Efficacy by the Degree, is a very preposterous Method, and liable to many great and fatal Mistakes. For no Remorse is so afflicting, as That which shuts Men out from all Comfort: And yet this Remorse is, of all other, the most fruitless, and the fartheſt off from true Repentance. There may be, and there often is, great danger in the very Degree of our Sorrow. For, if This degenerate into Astonishment and Perplexity of Heart, into the Darkness of Horrour and Confusion, into Distrust of Mercy through Christ, and a Persuasion, that our Sin is greater than can ever be forgiven; It is as displeasing to God, and as destructive of Repentance, as it is tormenting and uncomfortable to the Patient's own self. So that, where these Terrours are not the effect of Disease, and a Melancholy Constitution, (as very often they are) they ought to be looked upon, as a fresh Aggravation of the Fault. For this reason God promises to heal the *broken in Heart*, to pour Balm into these Spiritual Wounds, by reviving Hopes, and seasonable Consolations, and the supporting Sense of his Favour and readiness to be Reconciled, and the cheering Prospect of an Everlasting Bliss, which shall wipe away all Tears from the Eyes of these Pious Mourners. And, upon the same account, S. *Paul* commands the *Corinthians*, *To forgive and restore the Incestuous Person*, whom they had cast out of the Church, *lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over-much Sorrow.* In a word, God values Mens Reformation more than their Sighs and Tears. Indeed, he values These, only so far as they contribute to That: And those Men are sorry as they ought, who are so sorry, as to Sin no more. Let no Man therefore distract himself with vain and fantastical Notions in this Matter; but let us every one so now Lament his past Offences, as to forsake and amend them. And *Blessed are* all *they who* thus *mourn*, *For they shall* not fail to *be comforted.*

1 Cor. ii. 7.

Monday

Monday before Easter.

For the EPISTLE.

Isaiah lxiii.

1. *WHO is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.*

2. *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him, that treadeth in the wine-fat?*

3. *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.*

4. *For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

5. *And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondred that there was none to uphold: therefore my own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me.*

6. *And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.*

7. *I will mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.*

8. *For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.*

9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

10. *But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.*

11. *Then he remembred the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the Shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him?*

12. *That led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting Name?*

13. *That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble?*

14. *As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thy self a glorious Name.*

15. *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory: where is thy zeal, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?*

16. *Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, Thy Name is from everlasting.*

17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardned our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants sake: the tribes of thine inheritance.*

18. *The*

18. *The people of thy holineſs have poſſeſſed it but a little while: our adverſaries have troden down thy Sanctuary.*
19. *We are thine, thou never bareſt rule over Them: They were not called by thy Name.*

COMMENT.

Ver. 1. to 7. THis Chapter conſiſts of Three Parts. In the *Firſt*, The Prophet deſcribes a Victorious Deliverer, returning from the Slaughter of his own and God's Enemies. In the *Second*, He breaks out into Praiſe, for all the wonderful Mercies, beſtowed on his Church and People; recounts the many ſignal Appearances of his Power in their Favour, down from their Reſcue from the Bondage of *Egypt*;

Ver. 7. to 15. enlarges upon the Conducting them over the *Red Sea*, through the Wilderneſs, to the Land of Promiſe, where at length he fixed, and cauſed them to Reſt: And intermingles, with the mention of theſe Bleſſings, the Ingratitude and Diſobedience of the *Iſraelites*, which often provoked God, to Chaſtiſe them with Afflictions, and ſuffer their Enemies to gain Advantage over them. In the *Third*, He does, in the

Ver. 15. to the End. name of that People, earneſtly apply to God by Devout Prayer: Lament his Diſpleaſure, and their Sins, the wretched Cauſe of it; Conjure him by his former Loving-kindneſs, By the Relation he bore to them, as his Children and Covenanted People, By the Truſt they repoſed in Him alone, And by their preſent Calamitous Condition, to aſſert his own Right and Honour, to deliver his Sanctuary and Church from the Inſults and Tyranny of Idolaters, who Prophaned his Temple, and Perſecuted his Truth.

What particular Juncture of Circumſtances this Prophecy was directed to, is not very material at preſent to ſpend time in Examining. The Method, I am engaged in, ſeems to make it properly my Buſineſs, to apply

ply this Scripture to ſuch Meaning and Purpoſes, as the Church, by appointing it a Part in the Office of this Day, intended we ſhould take it in. And therefore that Signification, which is moſt nearly allied to the other Portions of Holy Writ, which it ſtands amongſt in our Liturgy, and to the Deſign of this Week's Devotions, will need no other reaſon to recommend it to us.

Now in the *Firſt* of thoſe parts I have divided it into, and which ſeems chiefly to call for our Meditation, The Prophet introduces ſome Perſon wondring at a ſurpriſing Object, which then preſented it ſelf. Whether himſelf in a Viſion, as Some; Or whether the Angels, as S. *Jerom* hath, underſtood it. This Object is a Conquerour returning Bloody from Battel: Of whom, by way of Dialogue, and in Anſwer to the Queſtions, Who he is, and why ſo Habited, an Account is given: Repreſenting a mighty Victory, obtained at the Expence of much Blood and Slaughter, won by the powerful but ſingle Arm of this Mighty Warriour: By which a total Rout was given to his Adverſaries, at a time, when, if He had not Interpoſed, no other was Diſpoſed, no other Able, to have quelled that Outrage and Havock they were making: And the Stained Garments, he then wore, demonſtrated the Sharpneſs of the Engagement, As his Meen and Manner of Approach denoted the Invincible Greatneſs of his Strength. Ver. 1.

By this Deſcription, there cannot, I conceive, be any reaſonable doubt, whether we be not now invited, to Contemplate the Hardſhips and the Succeſs of that Combat with the Enemies of our Souls, by which Chriſt brought Salvation to Mankind. Vanquiſhing Sin, and Death; wreſting the Prey out of the Hands of Satan, and, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphing over them in his Croſs.* A Conqueſt full of Wonder, that, in the loweſt Ebb of

ſeeming

ſeeming Weakneſs, diſcovered ſo much of hidden Power; That made the once infamous and accurſed Tree, an Inſtrument of Honour to himſelf, and of Bleſſings to the whole World: Turned the Object of all Mens Averſion and Scorn, to a means of *drawing all Men to him*: Deſtroyed Death, by enduring it; by the pouring out of his own Blood, took Vengeance on the Malice of that wicked Spirit, which ſpilt it; and by the Agonies of a Body Expiring under Anguiſh inſupportable, hath prevented the Everlaſting Torments of many Millions of Souls.

Such Glorious Effects, as Theſe, deſerve a place in our Thoughts at this time. To ſilence the Impertinence of thoſe Cavils, which unthinking and irreligious People do, from the Hiſtory of our Lord's Death and Sufferings, take the confidence to ſtart; And which, when that Hiſtory is ſo oft inculcated, and uppermoſt in our Minds, as now it ought to be, the Tempter may ſnatch this, as a favourable Opportunity, for Suggeſting. Were we indeed to read the bare Narrative, and reſt in Matter of Fact alone; it might appear altogether unaccountable, how God ſhould give up his own Bleſſed Son, how that Coeternal Son ſhould give himſelf, to ſo much Miſery and Shame. But, by joining the Epiſtle and Goſpel of this Day together, the reaſon of that Myſterious Diſpenſation is, in ſome good degree, explained to us. The Sufferings, related there, are abundantly juſtified, by the beneficial Conſequences aſcribed to them here. The Redemption of Fallen Man, ſince God in Mercy was pleaſed to eſteem it otherwiſe, it would ill become Us ſure, who enjoy the Benefit, who are indeed the Purchaſe, to think unworthy for his Son to Undertake, or Bought too Dear at any Price.

But, as the Advantages ariſing from hence prove the Fitneſs, and Reaſonableneſs, So does another Argument, furniſhed by the Prophet here, argue the Neceſ-

fity

ſity of this Diſpenſation. For, by ſaying, that *He trod the Wine-preſs alone*, that *there was no Helper*, and the like: He does in effect affirm, as S. *Peter* did afterwards, to the Jewiſh Synagogue, that there is *no other by whom Men can be Saved*. None was capable of procuring ſo Glorious a Deliverance, leſs than He who undertook it. No mere Man could be free from Sins of his own, and all who are not ſo, muſt ſtand in need of the Sacrifice of another. Or, if any Man could be ſuppoſed wholly Innocent, That Innocence could only ſave himſelf. He therefore, that could Vanquiſh Sin, and Death, and Hell, for Others, muſt be much more than Man. And He, who would attempt it, upon the ſame Terms our *Jeſus* did, muſt be much more than Man too. For *Greater Love than this hath no Man, that he lay down Life for his Friends*: But to Die, and So to Die, for Enemies, and Rebels, and Traitors, (and Sinners are all theſe) is a Perfection of Love, to which He only could come up, who *is Love* it ſelf.

Acts iv. 12.

John xv. 13.

1 John iv. 8, 16.

To Him therefore let us, with all Humility and Thankfulneſs, give the whole Glory of this Noble Atchievement: Acknowledging all our Happineſs, and all our Hopes, to be the effect, not of our Own, not of any Other's, but entirely due to His invaluable Merits. Let us, like the Prophet here, when publiſhing his Kindneſs, and reflecting, as at this time particularly we are bound to do, how Dear it hath coſt him; not forget at the ſame time, to lament thoſe Sins of Ours, which added to his Account. For, if *Iſaiah* found it reaſonable, in Terms ſo Affectionate, to Magnifie his People's Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and Settlement in the Promiſed Land: How inſenſible, how unworthy are They, who read and hear the Releaſe from a heavier Tyranny, the Deſtruction of a Spiritual *Pharaoh*, the Paſſage into the true and heavenly *Canaan* opened, at the Expence

of our Leader's own Life, without Impreſſions, as Grateful, as Humane Hearts can admit? If He confeſs, that, after all thoſe extraordinary Appearances of Almighty God in their behalf, his People's diſingenuous Behaviour turned him to be their Enemy; How greatly ought We to fear, how carefully to avoid, any unworthy returns, to One that hath Loved us ſo tenderly, which may juſtly alienate his Affection from us, and be at once our eternal Ruine and Reproach? If He again thought the former Favours of God, and the remembrance of his Covenant, proper Inducements to incline his Mercy; With what Confidence may We be allowed to approach him, in the Anguiſh of our Souls, in Diſtreſſes and Temptations, plead his Son's Name and Merits for Acceptance, and Depend upon the Goodneſs, which hath not only done, but endured, ſo much for our Sakes, for all proper Succours and Comforts? 'Tis true, our Difficulties are many, our Enemies mighty, our Selves impotent to the laſt degree: But let it be remembred, for our Support, that more are They that are with us, than All that are or can be againſt us: That the Heat of the Action is over, and we march againſt a Force already diſcomfited: He that is *mighty to Save*,

Rev. xix. 15. He that hath *trodden the Wine-preſs of his Father's Wrath alone*, hath *broken them in his Anger*, and *trampled them in his Fury*. And all the Repreſentations of his bitter Sufferings, which we are now eſpecially converſant with, are not only ſo many Intimations, how much this Conqueſt ſtood him in: But certain Evidences withal, that the Bloody Field is won. And all the Prayers and Tears, the Faſtings and Mournings, that now humble our Souls, and exerciſe our Bodies, are not the proper and efficient Cauſes of, but the Inſtruments of applying, and ſecuring, a ſhare in this Conqueſt: Acts of Repentance and Obedience, which hope to be accepted in *the Beloved*, not in any Virtue of their own, abſtracted from Him: Decent Expreſſions of

of Gratitude and Love, to a Saviour ſo Liberal of himſelf for our Salvation. That we may die after his Example, die to the Sins, which pierced his Soul to Death; And, riſing again to Righteouſneſs, conquer, as he hath done; conquer our vicious Appetites effectually, and trample down every unruly Paſſion. So ſhall we be qualified to attend, to bear a part in, his Triumphs; And, in the midſt of our Religious Sympathies, when melting away in Sorrow for his Agonies and Death, have a Right to ſuſtain our Spirits, with the Proſpect of a part in the Glories of his Reſurrection.

The GOSPEL.

St. Mark xiv.

1. *AFter two days was the feaſt of the Paſſover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief Prieſts and the Scribes ſought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.*

2. *But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt day, leſt there be an uproar of the people.*

3. *And being in Bethany, in the Houſe of Simon the leper, as he ſat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaſter box of ointment of ſpikenard, very precious, and ſhe brake the box, and poured it on his head.*

4. *And there were ſome that had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, Why was this waſte of the ointment made?*

5. *For it might have been ſold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor: and they murmured againſt her.*

6. *And Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone, why trouble you her? ſhe hath wrought a good work on me.*

7. *For ye have the poor with you always, and whenſoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.*

8. *She hath done what ſhe could: ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*

9. *Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this Goſpel ſhall be preached throughout the whole world, this alſo that ſhe hath done, ſhall be ſpoken of for a memorial of her.*

10. *And Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief Prieſts, to betray him unto them.*

11. *And when they heard it, they were glad, and promiſed to give him money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.*

12. *And the firſt day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Paſſover, his diſciples ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayeſt eat the Paſſover?*

13. *And he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there ſhall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water, follow him.*

14. *And whereſoever he ſhall go in, ſay ye to the good man of the houſe, The maſter ſaith, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the Paſſover with my diſciples?*

15. *And he will ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed and prepared, there make ready for us.*

16. *And his diſciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the Paſſover.*

17. *And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.*

18. *And as they ſate, and did eat, Jeſus ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, One of you which eateth with me, ſhall betray me.*

19. *And they began to be ſorrowful, and to ſay unto him one by one, Is it I? and another ſaid, Is it I?*

20. *And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the diſh.*

21. *The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: Good were it for that man, if he had never been born.*

22. *And as they did eat, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed, and brake it, and gave to them, and ſaid, Take, eat: This is my body.*

23. *And he took the Cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.*

24. *And he ſaid unto them, This is my blood of the new Teſtament, which is ſhed for many.*

25. *Verily I ſay unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.*

26. *And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

27. *And Jeſus ſaith unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep ſhall be ſcattered.*

28. *But after that I am riſen, I will go before you into Galilee.*

29. *But Peter ſaid unto him, Although all ſhould be offended, yet will not I.*

30. *And Jeſus ſaith unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.*

31. *But he ſpake the more vehemently, If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wiſe. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.*

32. *And they came to a place which was named Gethſemane, and he ſaith to his diſciples, Sit ye here, while I ſhall pray.*

33. *And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy,*

34. *And ſaith unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*

35. *And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that if it were poſſible, the hour might paſs from him.*

36. *And he ſaid, Abba, Father; all things are poſſible unto thee, take away this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

37. *And he cometh, and findeth them ſleeping, and ſaith unto Peter, Simon, ſleepeſt thou? Couldeſt not thou watch one hour?*

38. *Watch ye and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation. The ſpirit truly is ready, but the fleſh is weak.*

39. *And again he went away, and prayed, and ſpake the ſame words.*

40. *And when he returned, he found them aſleep again, (for their eyes were heavy) neither wiſt they what to anſwer him.*

41. *And*

41. *And he cometh the third time, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt: it is enough, the hour is come, behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of Sinners.*

42. *Riſe up, let us go, Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.*

43. *And immediately, while he yet ſpake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief Prieſts, and the Scribes, and the Elders.*

44. *And he that betrayed him, had given them a token, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; take him, and lead him away ſafely.*

45. *And aſſoon as he was come, he goeth ſtraightway to him, and ſaith, Maſter, Maſter, and kiſſed him.*

46. *And they laid their hands on him, and took him.*

47. *And one of them that ſtood by, drew a ſword, and ſmote a ſervant of the high Prieſt, and cut off his ear.*

48. *And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto them, Are ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and with ſtaves to take me?*

49. *I was daily with you in the Temple, teaching, and ye took me not; but the Scriptures muſt be fulfilled.*

50. *And they all forſook him and fled.*

51. *And there followed him a certain young man, having a linnen cloth caſt about his naked body, and the young men laid hold on him.*

52. *And he left the linnen cloth, and fled from them naked.*

53. *And they led Jeſus away to the high Prieſt, and with him were aſſembled all the chief Prieſts, and the Elders, and the Scribes.*

54. *And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high Prieſt: and he ſat with the ſervants, and warmed himſelf at the fire.*

55. *And the chief Prieſts, and all the Council ſought for witneſs againſt Jeſus, to put him to death, and found none:*

59. *For many bare falſe witneſs againſt him: but their witneſs agreed not together.*

57. *And there aroſe certain, and bare falſe witneſs againſt him, ſaying,*

58. *We heard him ſay, I will deſtroy this Temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.*

59. *But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together.*

60. *And the high Prieſt ſtood up in the mids, and asked Jeſus, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? What is it which theſe witneſs againſt thee?*

61. *But he held his peace, and anſwered nothing. Again the high Prieſt asked him, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed?*

62. *And Jeſus ſaid, I am; and ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

63. *Then the high Prieſt rent his clothes, and ſaith, What need we any farther witneſſes.*

64. *Ye have heard the blaſphemy, what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.*

65. *And ſome began to ſpit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to ſay unto him, Propheſie: And the ſervants did ſtrike him with the palms of their hands.*

66. *And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high Prieſt.*

67. *And when ſhe ſaw Peter warming himſelf, ſhe looked upon him, and ſaid, And thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth.*

68. *But he denied, ſaying, I know not, neither underſtand I what thou ſayeſt. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew.*

69. *And a maid ſaw him again, and began to ſay to them that ſtood by, This is one of them.*

70. *And he denied it again. And a little after, they that ſtood by, ſaid again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy ſpeech agreeth thereto.*

71. *But he began to curſe and to ſwear, ſaying, I know not this man of whom ye ſpeak.*

72. *And the ſecond time the cock crew: and Peter called to mind the word that Jeſus ſaid unto him, before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice: And when he thought thereon he wept.*

COMMENT.

THE Vileneſs of *Judas* his Treachery, in delivering up his Maſter to the Will of thoſe Bloodthirſty Enemies, whoſe implacable Malice ſought his Life, we have had occaſion, in ſome meaſure, to conſider, when treating of Yeſterday's Goſpel. The Next thing, in order of Time, is our Lord's Celebration of his Laſt Paſchal Supper, and the Inſtitution of that Bleſſed Sacrament, which he deſigned to be a conſtant Memorial of his Body broken, and his Blood ſhed, for us. Of which it is my purpoſe, particularly to treat hereafter. Let us at preſent therefore attend him to the Garden, in company of his Three Choice Friends; And thence to the High Prieſt's Hall. And ſo we ſhall employ the Meditations of this Day, partly on his Sufferings and Behaviour there, and partly on the unhappy Circumſtances into which one of thoſe Beloved Companions ſhortly after fell. The Former will inſtruct us, how much he was content to endure for Our Sakes: The Latter, will put us in Mind of our own Weakneſs, when content (and, as We think, Able) to ſuffer much for His; and what Reparations are fit to be made for any Failures of Duty, which ſuch Trials of our falſely ſuppoſed Strength ſhall, for our Humiliation, be permitted to drive us into.

Goſpel for *Wedneſday* next

Firſt then, What more lively Repreſentation can we poſſibly deſire of our Lord's willing Sufferings for Our ſakes, than this, which the Tragical Scene in the Gar-

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den ſets before our Eyes? Thoſe Tortures of Body, and that exceeding Sorrow and Heavineſs of Soul, even unto death, Thoſe Agonies and earneſt Prayers, which extorted even Sweats of Blood, and a moſt vehement Importunity, that the Bitterneſs of that Cup, he was then about to drink, might, if poſſible, paſs from him; Theſe are all Indications of Anguiſh and Grief of Heart, greater than can be expreſſed, on this occaſion.

By all theſe Pangs our Lord hath convinced us, at how dear a Price he thought our Souls worth Purchaſing, and what Obligations to Love and Gratitude lie upon Them, for whom he endured ſo much. By Theſe he ſhews, how highly diſpleaſing to God Sin is, and what Horrour and Dread They are to look for, whoſe Perſonal Guilt and Obſtinacy render them Objects of Divine Wrath and Vengeance, when ſo heavy a Load of Sufferings was laid on the Son of his Love, as almoſt quite weighed down a Perſon perfectly Innocent, whoſe unſpeakable Kindneſs ſubmitted to bear the Sins of Others. So heavy, that even He, who declares the deſign of his coming into the World to have been, that he might Suffer, and drink that bitter Cup, the very Dregs whereof We had deſerved, did yet, upon the approach and taſte of it, deſire, if it might be, a Releaſe from it. In which Deſire, becauſe there are ſome Difficulties, we ſhall do well to conſider the probable Reaſons of that Requeſt, and to obſerve the Manner and Temper of it.

Now it is not by any means to be imagined, that this Requeſt proceeded from Ignorance of his Father's Purpoſe, in relation to this Affair of Man's Redemption: Nor from want of that Conſtancy and Reſolution, which became the Generous Undertaker of it: Nor from any abatement of his Love toward the miſerable Wretches, for whom he undertook it; Nor from Raſhneſs or Inadvertency in that trying Hour: Nor from any Apprehenſion of his Father's Anger at his Perſon,

who was then engaged in an Act the moſt Acceptable, the moſt Beneficial, the higheſt Inſtance of Obedience, and That, for which the Scripture declares him to have been highly Rewarded, nay to have performed it in a Senſe of his Duty, and a certain Proſpect of ſuch exceeding Glory and Reward. All theſe are Interpretations, that derogate from his Honour, and argue a Weakneſs, of which he was not capable. And therefore, if we will be juſt to his Character, ſome other Account muſt be given of this Action, conſiſtent with the reſt of his Diſcourſes and Behaviour, and no way unworthy of the Son of God.

Phil. ii. 8, 9. Hebr. v. 7, xii. 2.

Now, in order hereunto, it is neceſſary we remember, that this Son of God was alſo the Son of Man: That the Humane, no leſs than the Divine, Nature had its part in our Redemption; That, without an Union of Both, the Scheme given us of it was altogether impracticable: That, this Union notwithſtanding, the Powers and Properties of each Nature continued perfectly diſtinct, and were exerted or ſuſpended ſeverally, as fit Occaſions offered: And conſequently, if we will avoid confuſion, we muſt be careful, in ſpeaking of our Saviour's Actions, to aſcribe them to that Principle from whence they took their Riſe: His Miracles, his diſcovering the Secrets of Mens Hearts, and the like, do therefore belong to the Divine; His Sufferings, and Death, and every thing that bears the Marks of Infirmity or Submiſſion, to the Humane, Nature in Chriſt.

In regard then, that the Efficacy of Man's Redemption depended upon a real Conjunction of theſe Two Natures in one Perſon; it was needful, that clear and undoubted Evidence ſhould be given of them Both in our Redeemer. But the diſtinguiſhing Characters of the Humane Nature do not conſiſt, ſo much in any Actions or Sufferings proper to the Body, as in the Operations eſ-

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ſential to, and Affections inſeparable from, the Humane Soul. And therefore, it was by no means ſufficient to prove our Saviour very Man, that he took part of the ſame Fleſh and Blood; unleſs it had alſo been demonſtrated, that he did partake in like manner of all the ſame inward Paſſions and Inclinations, which are natural to Mankind.

Now ſuch, in particular, are ſtrong Deſires of preſent Eaſe and Safety, Fear of, and Averſion to, Pain and Death, and whatever may greatly diſturb, or quite diſſolve, our Frame and Conſtitution. For Senſe, as well as Reaſon, is a part of Humane Nature. The Impreſſions of the Former are no leſs interwoven with our Original Compoſition, than the Dictates of the Latter. And the Weakneſs or Corruption of Humane Nature, as the Caſe now ſtands with us, does not lie, in our being very tenderly moved with Objects of Senſe, and the Affections they raiſe in us; but in our Proneneſs to be overborn by thoſe Affections, and to act againſt the Rules of Reaſon and Religion. Infirmities theſe may be called, in Compariſon of the Freedom and Perfections of God, and unbodied Spirits; But they are Such, as our Nature cannot be exempted from. And, had Sufferings and Death been perfectly indifferent to our Bleſſed Saviour, it is not to be conceived, how he ſhould have been our Saviour. For, upon theſe Terms, he could not be like Us in all things, ſin only excepted, that is, He had not been truly Man.

This ſeems to be ſufficiently clear, from the Condition of *Adam* in the State of Innocence; to whom, even then, Death was threatned as a Puniſhment. But every Threatning ſuppoſes the Matter of it to be ſomething, of which the Party concerned hath a Horror and Dread; And, upon that Account, thinks himſelf highly concerned to avoid it. So that theſe Apprehenſions in *Adam* were plainly antecedent to his Fall, not any part of his Fault, nor any Conſequence of it. And therefore, neither

ther is it any juſt Reflection upon the *Second Adam*, that He too was ſubject to the like Fears and Averſions. For God does not expect from any Man, that he ſhould have no Unwillingneſs at all to ſuffer, when called to it; but, that he ſhould conquer that Unwillingneſs, reſt in thoſe Appointments, and make God's Choice his own. The more any of us renounce our Own Will, upon ſuch trying Occaſions, the greater is our Virtue in complying with the Divine Will. And therefore our Lord's Deſires to be excuſed were no Diſparagement, either of his Obedience to God, or of his Love to Men. But, in truth, a higher Commendation of Both. Since, notwithſtanding ſo tender a Senſe of what he was about to undergo, he gave himſelf up to Sufferings, ſo harſh to Humane Nature in general, ſo exceeding bitter to Him in particular. And therefore, the more paſſionate his Wiſhes were for a Releaſe, the more meritorious was his Submiſſion.

Now that Submiſſion is fully expreſs'd in the Form of Words, by which he addreſſed to his Heavenly Father. Begging, that *if it were poſſible*, that is, if God ſaw fit, and found any other Method of accompliſhing the great Work of Man's Salvation equally wiſe and proper, he might be ſpared thoſe Agonies and Tortures, which were ruſhing upon him like a mighty Torrent, and had already begun to afflict his Soul with Grief inexpreſſible. But, at the ſame time, if the Divine Wiſdom continued to require theſe, ſettling himſelf to endure them, with an immovable Conſtancy of Mind. *Nevertheleſs, not my Will, but Thine be done.* The Former part of this Petition is the Voice of Humane Nature, according to that Principle of Senſe, which God, who implanted it in every Man, cannot diſapprove, when duly regulated. The Latter is the Voice of the ſame Humane Nature, according to that Principle of Reaſon and Duty, which ſets Bounds to our Deſires, checks and controuls our Paſſions and Inclinations, and

repreſents

represents it, as a becoming and necessary Act of Obedience, to resign our selves, and all our Affairs, to God's better Choice, and prefer his Disposals of Them and Us before any Desires or Inclinations of our own, in Opposition to them. And This is all the Perfection that Humane Nature is capable of, All that God expects under any sort of Difficulties and Trials; To preserve such a Temper of Soul, as, that Sense shall be always in Subjection to Reason, and both Sense and Reason ready to comply with the Appointments of his good Providence, and the Tenor of his Commands. He, who was Innocence it self, did, and We, without any Reflection upon our Virtue, may, fear, and feel, and complain of, and pray against, and wish to be delivered from, Afflictions, and Shame, and bodily Sufferings. Because Religion does not intend to extinguish our natural Appetites, and make us cease to be Men. But we must always remember to do thus, with that Limitation and Reserve, of which our Blessed Master hath here left us a Pattern; because Religion's Business is to reduce our natural Appetites to a due Subordination, and by containing them within proper Measures of Obedience to Him who gave them us, to make and keep us good Men.

Let us once more observe the Success of this Prayer; Which was seen, not in removing the Sufferings our Saviour deprecated, but in the Assistance of an Angel to strengthen him under them. And We, from hence, must learn to acknowledge the Wisdom and Goodness of God in all our Afflictions: Not supposing, that he hath put off the Bowels of a Father, when he exercises our Patience with Calamities grievous to be born: Nor presently giving those Petitions for lost and rejected, which are not granted in the Manner we desire: But thinking our selves kindly dealt with, and our Prayers answered to very good Purpose, when he supports our Spirits under those Difficulties, which Flesh and Blood are too feeble to encounter; and concluding, that even

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Events moſt unacceptable, will, if the Failing be not in our ſelves, turn at laſt to better Account, than thoſe more pleaſing, but leſs profitable, which, if left to our own diſpoſal, would be our Portion. In ſhort, that we never determine ſo wiſely, as when we leave all entirely to God's Choice, and our laſt and governing Deſire is, that *not* Ours, but our Father's *Will may be done.*

Thus much may ſuffice to give us a probable Account of our Bleſſed Saviour's Agonies and Sorrows upon this Occaſion, and of the Uſes proper to be made of them. Which Sorrows, it ſeems reaſonable to conceive, might be highly aggravated, by the clear Knowledge of the Horrors and Wrath, whereunto all, to whom theſe Sufferings prove fruitleſs, are appointed: And from a Foreſight withal, how vaſt the Numbers of ſuch will be, notwithſtanding the Miſery he took upon himſelf, to prevent, if it had been poſſible, their eternal Deſtruction. The afflicting Pain of which Reflections we can no more apprehend, than we can the infinite Tenderneſs and Compaſſion of Him, who may be preſumed to have felt it, in proportion to his own Love for the Souls he died to Redeem.

If we now, in the Next place, obſerve the Bleſſed Jeſus, Apprehended by the Officers, who came to take him, Receiving that treacherous Kiſs of an abandoned Diſciple, uſually a Token of Friendſhip, but now a Signal to the Malice of his Enemies; Dragged by unhallowed Hands to the Palace of the High-Prieſt; There Blindfolded, and Buffetted, Mock'd and Spit upon: This ſets before us, On the one hand, Such barbarous and inſulting Cruelty, as muſt needs raiſe our Indignation: On the Other, Such invincible Meekneſs and Conſtancy of Mind, as infinitely ſurpaſs any Inſtance in Story, and juſtly excite our Wonder, as well as furniſh Matter for our Uſe and Imitation.

For, The more we reflect upon our Selves, and the Reſentments commonly provoked in us by Injuries and

Indignities

Indignities, the more cauſe we ſhall ſee to admire that Silence of our Great Maſter, which ſo high Affronts, ſo licentious Revilings, ſo falſe Accuſations, had not the power to break; much leſs to extort the leaſt Angry Return from: A Silence, at which his very Adverſaries ſtood aſtoniſhed. Eſpecially when ſenſible, how very Weak the Charge againſt him was; and what Advantage he might eaſily have taken, to expoſe and confound the Wickedneſs and Malice of the Suborned Wretches, who had the Hardineſs to bring it.

A ſevere Reproof This Silence, of that Heat, and Clamour, and outrageous Bitterneſs, which too often do, upon much leſs trying occaſions, tranſport Them, who call, and profeſs to make, this *Jeſus* their Pattern; and yet even value themſelves, upon paying back Calumnies and Wrongs, Inſolencies and ſpightful Treatment, in the ſelf-ſame kind. An excellent Inſtruction too, what Deportment is proper for the Injured and Oppreſſed, when conſcious of their own Innocence, and committing themſelves, and the Righteouſneſs of their Cauſe, to the Protection of a Juſt God. And, upon both accounts, of exceeding uſe to be frequently meditated upon, that we may, by the help of this Example, be able to maſter thoſe Paſſions, which ſo few People feel themſelves in a condition to deal with; and to preſerve Decency and Temper, when attack'd by Provocations, which touch us even in the moſt ſenſible Part.

But ſtill, this reſolute Silence notwithſtanding, The ſame Jeſus, both before the High-Prieſt, and afterwards before *Pilate*, hath demonſtrated the force of that Courage, which Truth and Innocence inſpire; By laying aſide all Reſerve, when queſtioned concerning his own Character. And by bearing a Teſtimony, which, it was deſigned, ſhould, and, he plainly foreſaw, would, draw Condemnation of Death upon himſelf. Of ſo little account was even Life to Him, Of ſo little ought

to be to Us, where the Cauſe of God is concerned; Or any Duty, of importance ſo great, as to require (for many there are, which do require) our firm adherence and moſt perillous Vindication.

Mean while, This Contemplation of our Meek, but Conſtant Saviour, leads us to that of a Frail and Wavering Apoſtle. And, as the Hiſtory hath done, ſo it may be profitable for Us, to join the Remembrance of the Servant's (alas! Humane) Infirmities, with that of the Maſter's Divine Perfections. The Latter profits, by ſhewing what ſhe ſhould be; The Former we may profit our ſelves of, by ſeeing what we are; what we indeed are, then moſt of all, when leaſt ſuſpecting, that we are ſuch.

Let us then look upon S. *Peter* in the High-Prieſt's Palace. S. *Peter*, Not only an Apoſtle, but one of that number ſingled out, as a Companion of our Lord's Privacies, admitted to the honour of his moſt intimate Friendſhip, and, upon all Occaſions hitherto, expreſſing his ſenſe of theſe uncommon Favours, by all poſſible inſtances of Gratitude, and Love, and more than common Zeal: Drawn hither, at this time, moſt probably, from an affectionate Concern for his Maſter: Venturing his Perſon, notwithſtanding his Behaviour in the Garden juſt before, when wounding the High-Prieſt's Servant, muſt needs have expoſed Him, more than all the reſt of his Brethren, to the danger of being obſerved, and ill treated by them, who dealt ſo barbarouſly by his Lord. But this S. *Peter* preſently ſo changed from what he had been, that, terrified with the Impertinence of an inquiſitive Servant, he diſowned, and denied *Jeſus*; repeated that Denial thrice; repeated it after ſufficient ſpace for Recollection, and at laſt bound the Lye upon his Soul, with ſolemn Oaths, and dreadful Imprecations.

Ah! Where was now that gallant Faith, which made ſo glorious a Confeſſion of this *Jeſus* being the *Chriſt, the Son of the living God*? Where

S. Matth. xvi.

Where that eager Courage, that did not fear to meet his Lord walking upon the Sea? Where that bold Promiſe, that though *all ſhould be offended, and* leave their Dear Lord in his Diſtreſs, yet *would He never be offended?* Where that becoming Reſolution, *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee in any wiſe?* Where all that Fire and Intrepidity, which, but a very little while ago, had ſingly engaged a whole Band of Armed Men, in hope to reſcue the Lord he now abjures? What ſhall we ſay to ſuch Advantages, ſuch Warnings, ſuch Proofs of Affection, ſuch boaſted Firmneſs of Mind, ſuch deſperate Attempts, all loſt and forgotten, upon the ſilly Surmiſes of a Servant or two, without any formal Accuſation brought, without any Hand laid on him? What two Men ever differed more from one another, than This Man, in an Hour or two, differed from himſelf? From what himſelf had oft been proved, and had been all along till that very Hour or two; from what he hoped, and believed he ſhould, and no doubt intended fully to, continue, to the laſt Moment of his Life? Matth. xiv. xxvi.

Yet ſo ſudden, ſo prodigious an Alteration our Lord foretold and permitted; And ſuch he thought fit we ſhould be acquainted there was, in this Great Man. Wiſely to be ſure; as for Other Reaſons, ſo particularly for Theſe. That this Example might effectually convince us, how Frail even the Beſt are, how little Maſters of their own Paſſions, how unfit to undertake for themſelves, even when their Deſires of doing well are moſt fervent, and their Reſolutions moſt ſincere. In ſhort, how vain all Confidences in our own Strength and Virtue muſt needs be, which, by tempting us to imagine we are Something, provoke God to withdraw that Grace, (the neceſſity whereof we do not then ſufficiently apprehend) and ſo by woful Experience, make us feel, that in truth we are Nothing.

But

But This Fall of S. *Peter*, as it ought to be applied for a neceſſary Mortification of our Vanity; So may it likewiſe ſerve us, for a Support under our Frailties and Temptations. But This is a Comfort, which can be regularly adminiſtred to none, except to Them, who are careful to be like him in that Repentance, whereof we have alſo an account, in the Scripture now under Conſideration. For, as his Fault was ſudden and ſurpriſing: So was his Recovery ſpeedy and effectual. Long it was not, before he was awakened into Recollection, by a pitying Look of his injured Maſter, and the Crowing of the Cock. Immediately upon the Reflection, he forſook the guilty Scene of his foul Offence, ſought a convenient Place for retired Thoughts, melted away in Tears for the horrour of his Crime, and from thenceforward became again the ſame Faithful, Affectionate, Undaunted S. *Peter*, he had been before. The Book of *Acts* informs us at large, what noble Reparations he afterwards made for this Breach of Faith. How Vigorous and Bold he was in Preaching, how Forward and even Joyful in Suffering for, the Goſpel of his once denied Lord. And the ſame *Jeſus*, who foretold, by what means he ſhould Offend, did ſhortly after let him underſtand, by *what Death he ſhould glorifie God.* All which are Teſtimonies of greater Value; becauſe Theſe were the long and conſtant Practice of a ſettled Faith, the courſe of many Years, the habit and the ſenſe of the Man: Whereas his Crime, though exceeding great, was however of ſhort Continuance, the effect of Fear and Infirmity, in great meaſure, and not ſo much the Act of the Man, as the Violence of Paſſions and Temptations, which had then almoſt unmann'd him.

John xxi.

The ſame Methods muſt We be ſure to follow, when it ſhall pleaſe God to ſuffer any grievous Temptation to overtake Us. We muſt, upon the firſt ſenſe of our Fault, burſt through, and break our Snare; afflict our Souls

Souls with a Sorrow, that may carry ſome proportion to the ſad Occaſion of it: Nor tarry a Moment in the way of Temptation; never look back upon our Miſdemeanors, without a juſt Abhorrence; And, above all, uſe our utmoſt Diligence to bring Honour to Virtue and Religion, by our future Practice. 'Tis true indeed, We cannot do all, or any part of this, without the Aſſiſtances of Divine Grace. 'Tis That alone can *ſtrengthen them that ſtand.* 'Tis That alone, muſt *raiſe up them that fall.* But the ſame *Jeſus, who turned upon Peter* and brought him back to *himſelf*; will not leave Us to periſh in our Folly; but will find out ſome happy, ſome awakening Diſpenſation. And provided we be as careful, as *Peter* was, to obſerve, to ſtrike in with, to improve it; will convert even our Temptations, and paſt Sins, to His Glory, and our own Profit. The ſame powerful Interceſſor prays for every ſincere though feeble Servant, that *his faith fail not*: But They, that are ſincere, ſhould remember, they are feeble too, and not, with this Apoſtle, ſleep in the Hour of Danger; But Watch and Pray: Watch conſtantly, Pray fervently, that they enter not into Temptation. As knowing by this Example, and feeling by their own Experience, that the *Willingneſs of the Spirit* is not Preſervative ſufficient againſt the *Weakneſs of the Fleſh.* Luke xxii, 61.

Tueſday before Eaſter.

For the EPISTLE.

Iſaiah l. 5.

PARAPHRASE.

5. THE *Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.*

5. God hath choſen me for his Servant, and inſtructed me in my Errand, which I readily undertook, notwithſtanding I knew how ill it would be received.

6. I ſubmitted to all manner of contumelious Uſage, and was not diſcouraged by it.

6. I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from ſhame and ſpitting.

7. For God, I know, will ſupport me, ſo that the Malice of my Enemies ſhall not prevail to my Deſtruction. Therefore I continue impenetrable to their Cruelty and Scorn, as aſſured, that I ſhall not be put to Shame.

7. For the Lord God will help me, therefore ſhall I not be confounded: therefore have I ſet my face like a flint, and I know that I ſhall not be aſhamed.

8. He will Plead my Cauſe, and Vindicate my Innocence, ſo that I dare confidently challenge all that Speak or Think ill of me, to come forth and make good their Charge.

8. He is near that juſtifieth me; Who will contend with me? let us ſtand together. Who is my adverſary? let him come near to me.

9. God will ſtand by me, in this tryal I put my ſelf upon; and all my accuſers ſhall fail and fret away.

9. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that ſhall condemn me? lo, they all ſhall wax old as a garment, the moth ſhall eat them up.

10. If among ſo great a number of Slanderers and Scorners, there be found ſome few who fear God, and hearken to his Meſſenger: If theſe be under grievous Troubles, and have no Comfort; let not their Afflictions drive them to Deſpair, but (after my Example) put them upon a firm Dependance on the God they ſerve, for Protection and Deliverance.

10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.

11. But as for You, who think to ſecure your Selves by wicked Means, go on in your vain Projects: But know, that the end of all your ſhort imaginary Satisfaction ſhall be, to periſh in Miſery and laſting Grief.

11. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs your ſelves about with ſparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. This ſhall ye have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.

COMMENT.

THis Portion of Scripture contains ſo exact a Deſcription of the barbarous Indignities our Bleſſed Saviour ſuffered, and of his Meek Deportment under them, as looks more like an Hiſtorical Narration of Facts already paſs'd, than a Prediction of Events then ſeveral Hundred Years to come. Had *Iſaiah* been preſent at the

the High-Prieſt's Palace, and the Judgment-Hall, What fuller Repreſentation could He, what indeed do the Evangeliſts themſelves, give more punctual, than that, which the Holy Ghoſt hath here inſpired him with? They, who attend to the Connexion of This, with the Chapter next before, will ſee reaſon ſufficient to conclude, that the Prophet in both perſonates the *Meſſiah*: And They, who compare the account here, with that of our Lord's Paſſion in the New Teſtament, muſt be utterly Blind, or extreamly Perverſe, if they can any longer ſuffer themſelves to doubt, whether *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* were that *Meſſiah*.

In regard then, that this Prophecy is ſo plain, as to ask no Enlargement, either for the Interpreting, or the Applying it: We may very well join it with the Goſpel of the Day, as partly Introductory to, and partly Parallel to it. The Affronts and Injuries committed upon our Bleſſed Saviour, at the Palace of the High-Prieſt, make the Subject of this Epiſtle; which leads him, as it were, from the Garden, through all the painful Steps of Rudeneſs, and Violence, Inſult, and Scorn, and Reproach, till it ſets him at *Pilate*'s Bar. Where the Goſpel takes him up, and carries him on to Crucifixion and Death. So that Both together proceeding in ſo regular a Method, and making one continued Relation, I chooſe to treat upon them together. Not forgetting, in the mean while, ſome Particulars, which *Iſaiah* here ſuggeſts proper Matter for, and fit to be obſerved, as Inferences well ſuited for the Cloſe of the Whole. Such are,

1. The Expedience of that Saviour, who came to Expiate for the Sins of the World, not only Dying as a Sacrifice, but Prefacing that Death with all the moſt aggravating Circumſtances of Shame, and Scorn, and Deteſtation.

2. The Uſe and Comfort, which theſe Sufferings of our Bleſſed Lord may be of, to any Good Men, when under any Extremity of Affliction or Diſgrace. *Ver.* 7. to 11.

3. The Diſappointment, and Guilt, and ſevere Puniſhment of our Great Maſter's Murtherers, and Perſecutors; And, in proportion, of all who depend altogether upon humane Means for compaſſing their Deſigns: Eſpecially if, as in the Caſe before us, thoſe Means or Deſigns be, both, or either, of them Wicked. Thus much I gather from *Ver.* 7, 8, 9, 11.

Such is the Improvement of the Paſſage at hand, obvious to every Reader, and All exemplified in the Sufferings and Death of our Dear Redeemer, to which we will now proceed.

The GOSPEL.

S. Mark xv.

1. *AND ſtraightway in the morning, the chief Prieſts held a conſultation with the Elders and Scribes, and the whole Council, and bound Jeſus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.*

2. *And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt it.*

3. *And the chief Prieſts accuſed him of many things: but he anſwered nothing.*

4. *And Pilate asked him again, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? Behold how many things they witneſs againſt thee.*

5. *But Jeſus yet anſwered nothing, ſo that Pilate marvelled.*

6. *Now at that feaſt he releaſed unto them one priſoner, whomſoever they deſired.*

7. *And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made inſurrection with him, who had committed murder in the inſurrection.*

8. *And the multitude crying aloud, began to deſire him to do as he had ever done unto them.*

9. *But Pilate anſwered them, ſaying, Will ye that I releaſe unto you the King of the Jews?*

10. *(For he knew that the chief Prieſts had delivered him for envy)*

11. *But the chief Prieſts moved the people, that he ſhould rather releaſe Barabbas unto them.*

12. *And*

12. *And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the king of the Jews?*
13. *And they cried out again, Crucifie him.*
14. *Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucifie him.*
15. *And so Pilate willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus when he had scourged him, to be crucified.*
16. *And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.*
17. *And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,*
18. *And began to salute him, Hail king of the Jews.*
19. *And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees, worshipped him.*
20. *And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucifie him.*
21. *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.*
22. *And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a scull.*
23. *And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.*
24. *And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, What every man should take.*
25. *And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.*
26. *And the superscription of his accusation was written over,* THE KING OF THE JEWS.
27. *And with him they crucifie two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.*
28. *And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbred with the transgressors.*
29. *And they that passed by, railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,*
30. *Save thy self, and come down from the cross.*
31. *Likewise also the chief priests mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others, himself he cannot save.*
32. *Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him, reviled him.*
33. *And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour,*
34. *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*
35. *And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.*
36. *And one ran, and filled a spunge full of vinegar, and put it upon a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.*
37. *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.*
38. *And the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*
39. *And when the centurion which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.*

COMMENT.

IF ever ſuffering Innocence and injured Virtue had power to move Compaſſion, and melt us into Tears; If ever the Barbarity and Inſolence of Baſe and Wicked Men could provoke our juſt Indignation and Abhorrence, let it appear at this time. At this, I ſay, the Service whereof preſents us with a Scene of the blackeſt Villany, that ever malicious and enraged People were Guilty of; and at the ſame time too, with the brighteſt, the moſt unſpotted Virtue, the meekeſt, the moſt invincible Patience, that ever ſuffered in humane Fleſh. Had ſome very vile Impoſtor been expoſed, abuſed, tormented, as the Evangeliſts relate, yet the Cruelty even to ſuch a Man would have been thought great, and the foulneſs of his Guilt would ſcarce have extinguiſh'd all our Pity. But when a Perſon was ſo ill treated, whoſe only Meſſage into the World was to lead Men into the Truth, who was himſelf *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; Who can be ſo Inhumane, as not to reſent it, with a quick and tender Senſe of what he endured, and with the greateſt Deteſtation of thoſe Mercileſs, Malicious Wretches, that inflicted it upon him? All this, I ſay, is due to our Lord's Innocence, and injured Virtue. But, when we conſider farther, that thoſe Sufferings had a ſecret End, unſeen to the Beholders of them at that time, that they were directed and deſigned by Almighty God, to the moſt glorious Purpoſes of Redeeming Mankind from Sin and Hell, and making this Juſt and Holy Perſon a Sacrifice, and Atonement for the whole World; When we obſerve that he ſuffered for Us, in Our Stead, and for Our unſpeakable Benefit; Then Pity is too low, too cold a Paſſion; and it is neceſſary we ſhould be tranſported with Wonder, and enflamed with Gratitude and Love. The Dying for Us, though

though in all thoſe alleviating Circumſtances, that might have ſoftened Death, and made it the moſt eaſie and tolerable, that it could be made, is what moſt of Us, who are fond of Life for the mere ſake of Living, have reaſon to Magnifie, as an unparallell'd Inſtance of Kindneſs. But, to ſubmit to all thoſe Aggravations, which add to the Terrors of Dying, and are infinitely more Grievous, than the thing it ſelf; ſhews plainly, that there was nothing thought too much for compaſſing our Happineſs: And, that His Kindneſs and Zeal for our Redemption knew no Bounds. Nay which is yet more; This Perſon was not under any Natural neceſſity of Dying, as We all are; but God Bleſſed from all Eternity, God, above the reach of Suffering, or Pain, or Corruption; And yet Bleſſed and Impaſſible as he was, he made that his Choice, which could not be his Fate. He took a Body capable of Miſery and Death, and he took it on purpoſe, that he might Suffer and Die in it. So free, ſo amazing was this Goodneſs: So little did the Eternal Father ſpare his own Son, ſo far was the Son from ſparing himſelf for Us.

To have his Blood ſet to ſale at a Price, and that but a very low and poor one too; That Blood, which was a Purchaſe equivalent to the whole World, rated at *thirty Pieces of Silver*; To be Betrayed and Sold by one of his own Servants, his Friend and conſtant Companion; One, who was honoured with the Dignity of an Apoſtle, with the power of working Miracles, with a Commiſſion of Preaching his Goſpel, and (to free him from the Temptation of ſuch baſe Avarice) was intruſted with the Bag, and made Diſtributer of the Stores of his Maſter; To be Aſſaulted with Swords and Staves, and Apprehended as a common Robber, and Peſt of Mankind; To be haled from one High-Prieſt to Another, and there Blindfolded, Spit upon, Buffeted, and Inſulted over; To be expoſed to the Mercenary Tongues of Falſe Witneſſes, and, in the midſt of all this Diſtreſs,

left alone; Not One Friend, not One Diſciple, to ſtand by him; but forſaken by the Reſt, and ſolemnly diſowned, and denied by the Chief of them; To be dragged from One Judgment-ſeat to Another, And, when neither *Pilate* nor *Herod* could find any Fault in him, yet to have a moſt unjuſt Sentence of Death pronounced againſt him; pronounced by that very Mouth, which, at the ſame Inſtant, was ſo over-power'd with the force of Truth, as to atteſt and proclaim his Innocence, and ſo condemn it ſelf of Iniquity and Cowardice; To have a known Robber, and Murtherer, One, who ſtood Convicted of Sedition and Blood, preferred before him, and ſo be made a Sacrifice to the Rage and implacable Envy of a tumultuous Rabble: Theſe are, all of them, Circumſtances of ſuch Horrour, and Inſolence, and Cruelty, as never met together before. They render this a Caſe without a Parallel, a Death beyond Example, a Wickedneſs beyond Expreſſion. Each of them would very well bear, Each of them very well deſerves, ſuch an Enlargement, as muſt needs be very Moving, very Amazing. They are a Subject too large for a Diſcourſe, fit indeed to take up the greateſt part of our Lives. Therefore I will only fix upon ſome very few Particulars at preſent, and ſo repreſent them to my Reader's Conſideration, as to give him a hint how he ought to proceed in the reſt. That is, *Firſt*, To ſet forth the things themſelves; And, *Secondly*, To ſhew, what profitable and pious Reflections they ought to raiſe in our Minds.

The Crimes, alledged againſt *Jeſus* before the High-Prieſt, were too Falſe, or too Frivolous, to bear any weight, And all the Evidence, that they had pack'd againſt him, was found inſufficient to take away his Life. In all which we may obſerve a particular Providence. For, it being foretold that the *Meſſias* ſhould be Crucified, if he had died by the Hands of the *Jews*, or for any Offence againſt Their Law, this could not

have

have been accompliſhed; Becauſe Crucifixion was not a *Jewiſh*, but a *Roman* Puniſhment. When therefore he had Acquitted himſelf before their Council, They purſue him with a freſh Accuſation, bring him before the Governour, and there charge him with Treaſon againſt *Cæſar*, in making himſelf a King. This *Pilate* ſoon diſcovered to be meerly the effect of Envy and Spight. But however, not daring to provoke the People, by an Act of Juſtice, that might call his Loyalty and Zeal for *Cæſar* into queſtion; he yielded to their Clamours, and gave command, that the Priſoner ſhould be Crucified, according to their deſire. This Puniſhment, as will appear by and by, was enough, one would think, to gratifie the moſt inveterate Malice. But however, To make the Pomp of it the greater, and give their Rage its full Scope, they firſt divert themſelves with his Miſery, and barbarouſly inſult over their Suppoſed Malefactor. *The Soldiers of the Governour took Jeſus into the common Hall, and gathered unto him the whole Band, and they Stripped him, and put on him a Scarlet Robe; And when they had platted a Crown of Thorns, they put it upon his Head, and a Reed in his right Hand, and they bowed the Knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail King of the Jews. And they ſpit upon him, and took the Reed and ſmote him on the Head.* Verſe 16, 17, 18, 19.

Inhumane Wretches! thus to revel and ſport with a condemned Man; to triumph in his Death, and Preface it with ſo much Pageantry, and Deriſion! This is a Barbarity unknown even to them, who deal in Blood. And undergoing the Law is allowed a Satisfaction, even for the moſt Guilty. But ſo God was pleaſed at that time to ſuffer it, that they ſhould behave themſelves moſt unbecoming the Character of Soldiers, and *Romans*, to fill up the meaſure of their Iniquities, and the Bitterneſs of that Cup, which his Son was appointed to drink. It was requiſite, that Sin ſhould be expoſed

posed every way that was possible. And therefore He, who had no Sin of his own, but took Ours upon him, must suffer all that was any way due to it, all that could be consistent with his Nature to suffer. The King of Heaven and Earth was therefore Arrayed in Purple, and made a Spectacle to the People, as if he had pretended to a Royalty, which belonged not to him. A mock Crown and Scepter is given him, and Obeysance made to him in Jest and Wantonness, that he might be the gazing, and the laughing Stock of the Beholders. Royal Salutations, seconded with Spittings in his Face, and his Scepter broke about his Head, to render him more Ridiculous and Contemptible. Malice was then let loose, and all the Instruments of Hell set on work, to make the Injury more black and detestable. This was Satan's *Hour*, *and the Power of Darkness*; and it appeared to be so, by such unrelenting Cruelties, as could never have been exercised, if the Committers of them had not been carried beyond the common Corruptions of Nature, and for that time ceased to be Men. For, though the Nature of Government and Civil Constitutions require great Severities, upon such as are found, or supposed, to have grievously Offended; yet no Laws pretend to countenance Barbarity and Insolence, and we can scarce forbid our selves pitying the worst of Criminals. But here was a Person declared wholly Blameless; None of the Courts, before whom he stood, could convict him of the least Fault; The very Judge, who partially Condemned him, washed his Hands publickly, and disclaimed the having any thing to do in taking him off. And yet this Just Man found no Bowels, but all possible Industry was used to add to his Torment, and to render him more Vile and Odious, and more unworthy of Compassion.

But, though Insolence and Cruelty be detestable upon all Occasions, and more so yet to the Innocent and Injured, yet is there something of Difference with regard

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to the Dignity of the Perſon, againſt whom it is exerciſed; And, the more exalted his Character is, the more cutting it is in Him that endures, and the more villanous in Them that commit it. Our own Nation hath ſeen (and Woe unto us that we have ſeen) an excellent Prince, inhumanely expoſed, murthered with wicked Triumph; and all Good Men, I think, muſt needs look back upon that Fact with Grief, and Horror, and great Indignation. But alas! though This were ſuch a Wickedneſs, as hath ſeldom been ſeen under the Sun, yet, how vaſtly ſhort does it come of the Affronts and Indignities put upon our Bleſſed Lord? The beſt and holieſt of the Sons of Men are not pure in His Sight; nor ought to be compared with his Innocence, even as Man; And the Greateſt, and moſt Glorious Monarchs are yet infinitely more beneath his Divine Majeſty and Perfections. Yet even this unblemiſht Virtue, even this Almighty King, ſuffered the Rudeneſs and Inſults of a blind and enraged Multitude. He permitted himſelf to be made, as it was written of him long before, *a Worm and no Man, a very Scorn of Men, and the Outcaſt of the People; all they that ſaw him, laughed him to Scorn.* Pſal. xxii. 6. They entertained themſelves with reproaching and ridiculing him, and, when they had ended this inſolent Farce, they then proceeded to act the laſt part of their intended Tragedy, and reſolved to glut their Fury with his Blood. Yet ſtill they proceed to obſerve their former Method, of giving Scoffs and Stripes together, to wound his Soul, as well as bruiſe his Body. For, after they had mocked him, they led him away to crucify him. A Death, the moſt dreadful of all Others, both for the Shame and for the Pain of it.

Firſt, Crucifixion was a Death full of Shame. So ſcandalous, that it was inflicted, as the laſt Mark of Deteſtation, upon the vileſt of People. Peculiar to the meaneſt Condition, and to the moſt heinous Offences. It was the Puniſhment of Robbers and Murtherers, provided

vided that they were Slaves too. But otherwiſe, if they were free, and had the Privileges of the City of *Rome*, this was then thought a Proſtitution of that Honour, and too infamous a Penalty for ſuch a one, let his Miſdemeanour have been what it would. Accordingly we ſee what Companions our Saviour had in his Death, how *he was numbred among the worſt of Tranſgreſſors*, and (according to the Prophet) *made his Grave with the wicked.* Nay, ſo very odious and abominable was this Puniſhment, that, when they had a mind to brand the Memory of any very flagitious People, Traitors to the State, and common Enemies to Mankind; We are told, that they thought it a moſt effectual way to fix an indelible Infamy upon them, to hang their Pictures thus; and to crucify thoſe in *Effigie*, whom they could not ſerve ſo in their own Perſons. Herein then we perceive the unſpeakable Condeſcenſion of our Bleſſed Saviour, who did not only vouchſafe to die, but did not diſdain the moſt ignominious Death, that the Malice and Scorn of his Enemies could inflict; *To take upon him the Form of* the meaneſt *Servant*, nay of the baſeſt and blackeſt Criminal; *That he became obedient unto Death*, was a moſt aſtoniſhing Inſtance of Humility; but to ſtoop ſo very low, as *the Death of the Croſs*, this was *to make himſelf of no Reputation* indeed.

Iſaiah liii. 9.

Secondly, This Death was terrible above Others, not only for the Scandal and Diſgrace, but for the extreme Pain and Torture of it. And of this the very Manner is enough to convince us. For, the Form of a Croſs being that of Two Poſts cutting one another to right Angles. On that which ſtood upright, the Body was faſtned, by nailing the Feet to it; and to the other tranſverſe Piece, by nailing the Hands on each ſide. The Pain whereof muſt needs be moſt acute, becauſe theſe Parts of the Body, being the Inſtruments of Action and Motion, are provided by Nature with a much greater Quantity of

Nerves, than Others have Occaſion for. And, ſince all Senſation is performed by the Spirits in theſe Nerves, whereſoever They abound, the Senſe muſt needs, in Proportion, be more quick and tender. And in this Caſe we are to conſider the Hands and Feet, not only as pierced through with Iron Pins; and theſe ſo large, that *Thomas*, required for his Conviction, to *thruſt his Finger into the Print* of them: But the Weight of the whole Body hanging upon thoſe Faſtenings, and thoſe tormenting Diſtortions of the Limbs, which the Pſalmiſt ſignified, when (ſpeaking in the Perſon of our Saviour) he complains, *They pierced my Hands and my Feet, I may tell all my Bones.* If the Bitterneſs of this Pain had been in any Degree recompenced by the Shortneſs, it had yet been more tolerable. But alas! it was a very ſlow and lingering, as well as an exceeding ſharp Death. For, though the Miſery was ſo great, yet none of the Vitals were immediately affected, and the Body continued thus ſtretch'd out, till exceſs of Anguiſh had by Degrees quite exhauſted the Spirits, and driven out the Soul. Our Bleſſed Saviour, we are told expreſly, continued thus Three long Hours, in Languiſhings and Thirſts, and leiſurely Pangs of approaching Death. And at laſt, with ſtrong Cries and Groans, gave up the Ghoſt. What a tedious Torment is this, in Compariſon of thoſe Executions, that Malefactors commonly undergo; where the Seat of Life is immediately aſſaulted, and the Senſe of Pain can be but very ſhort? The *Romans* themſelves, who uſed this Puniſhment, were frequently ſo compaſſionate, as to ſtrangle the Party firſt, and content themſelves with expoſing the dead Body upon the Croſs. But, in our Saviour's Caſe there was no relenting, no remains of Humanity, for His Eaſe and Relief. Death attack'd him in its moſt frightful Shape, and wrecked his utmoſt Spight upon him. The Length of his Miſery was ſo far from being unuſual, that, we are told, the Governor wondred

Pſal. xxii. 17.

to

to hear in the Evening, that he was dead ſo ſoon. And the Soldiers, who came to take the Bodies down from the Croſs, found the Two Companions of his Shame ſtill ſtruggling for Life. But, to Us it cannot ſeem ſtrange, that his Spirits ſhould be ſo much ſooner waſted, who know what Variety of Miſeries he paſt through to it. The wondrous and unſpeakable Agony in the Garden, the Violence of the Jews, the Buffetings of the Servants, the being haraſſed and dragged from one Court of Judicature to another, the Thorny Crown, and mercileſs Scourges, thoſe deep Furrows, which the barbarous Plowers cut in his Back: All theſe, I ſay, and (which was yet worſe than all theſe) that unconceivable Anguiſh and ſad Anxiety of Heart, which, before any outward Violence was offered to him, did, with its own Weight, depreſs his Soul, and make it exceeding ſorrowful and heavy, even unto Death! All conſpired to ſpend his natural Strength, and force his Life away. Nature was quite worn out, and what was wanting in Length of Time upon the Croſs, had been ſupplied another way, many other ways; Many other ways indeed to Us unknown. For certainly never any Perſon died with ſuch Variety, ſuch Bitterneſs of Torments, of ſtudied, malicious Torments. Never any was ſenſible of ſuch exquiſite Miſery, nor had Cauſe to utter ſuch a doleful Complaint, as He, who, though the Son of God, yet felt himſelf ſo deſtitute of Conſolation and Support, as to cry out, with a paſſion that lookt almoſt like Deſpair, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

Such were the Sufferings of our dying Redeemer: Such, and infinitely greater, than it is poſſible for Me to expreſs, or any Man to conceive: But ſo much of them, as we are capable of apprehending, will, if duly conſidered, be of great Uſe to us. Particularly, it may be very proper upon this Occaſion, as hath this Day been already intimated, to obſerve.

1. *Firſt,*

1. *First*, The Expedience of that Saviour, who came to expiate the Sins of Mankind, dying under all the moſt aggravating Circumſtances of Shame, and Scorn, and Deteſtation. This, no doubt, was done, as I hinted before, to expoſe the heinouſneſs of Sin, to prove how juſt an Object it is of the Wrath of God, how vilely it degrades the Committers of it, and to teach us, that no Diſgrace or Puniſhment can be too great for Such; when we ſee Him, who only ſtood in the place of Sinners, loaded with all the Sufferings and Indignities, capable of being undergone by a Perſon perfectly Innocent, and by the Humane united to the Divine Nature.

So was it expedient too, for manifeſting the Tenderneſs of his Love, the incomparable Greatneſs of his Humility and Condeſcenſion, and his boundleſs Generoſity and Zeal for accompliſhing the noble Deſign he came about, and not diſdaining even the moſt difficult Terms of working out the Salvation of Souls.

So was it once more, for inſtructing us in the Nature of the like Reproaches and Sufferings, that we are not to meaſure Mens Virtue, or the ſtate of their Souls, with regard to the Favour of God and another World, by ſuch Marks as theſe; ſince the Son of his Love endured them without forfeiting the One, or ſtaining the Other. And ſo it was again, for ſetting us an Example of Meekneſs, and Patience and Forgiveneſs of the wicked Inſtruments of ſuch inhumane Treatment, if at any time they ſhall be permitted to befall us.

2. The Next Particular, concerning the Uſe and Comfort, which our Lord's Sufferings may bring to Good Men in affliction, hath been already ſpoke to, upon the Epiſtle for *Sunday* laſt.

3. The *Third* is therefore That, which I chooſe at preſent to inſiſt upon: The Diſappointment, I mean, and Guilt of our great Maſter's Murtherers and Perſecutors: and in Proportion, of All, who depend upon Humane Force and Subtlety, for compaſſing of wicked Deſigns,

ſigns. And here, who can ſufficiently admire the Wiſdom of Almighty God, who thus ordered the Great Work of Man's Redemption, in deſpight of all the Malice and Subtlety of the Devil and his wicked Inſtruments to the contrary? The Envy and Spight of the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees, The Eaſineſs and Fury of the Common People, the Rage and Inſolence of the Soldiers, the profligate Conſciences of falſe Witneſſes, the Treachery and Avarice of one of Chriſt's own Diſciples, the Timorouſneſs of a corrupt and Timeſerving Judge; The Barbarity of Thoſe, who derided, and ſcourged, and crucified him, and inſulted over his dying Agonies and Pains; All theſe were made uſe of by the Enemy of Mankind, to deſtroy *Jeſus*, and to overthrow his Kingdom, and to root out his Name, and all Honour for it, from among Men. And yet ſee, how vain all theſe Attempts were in the Event. They were over-ruled by Providence, ſo as to bring about thoſe very Purpoſes, which the Actors, and the Evil Spirit who ſet thoſe Engines at work, laboured to defeat. They every one conſpired to render the Matter more glorious, more uniform, more exactly conformable to the original Scheme and Deſign marked out for it; And Each contributed to finiſh that Work, which Some of them knew not of, which Others oppoſed, which None of them in the leaſt intended. This was the only way they could think of, for ruining the Reputation of *Jeſus*, and blotting out the Remembrance of his Miracles and Doctrine; And yet, in reality, it was the only way, by which his Goſpel could be Eſtabliſhed, beyond all Conrradiction, and to all future Ages. Eor, Had not theſe Men been ſo exceedingly, ſo perverſely barbarous and wicked, This Holy Teacher, This Innocent Liver, This General Benefactor to Wretches in Diſtreſs, could never have been taken off by ſo Ignominious a Death. Had he not been put to ſuch a Death, he could not have ſuffered the Shame and Torment, which the Divine Juſtice required, as a Satisfaction for

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the Sins of Men. Had not the Proceedings againſt him been injurious and unreaſonable, that Death had not had the Merit of a Sacrifice and Expiation for the Guilty, whoſe Perſons he bore. Had not the Innocent *Jeſus* thus died, the *Prince of this world* had not been *judged*; but That was the Devil's Condemnation in the preſent Caſe, that he *had nothing* in the Perſon, againſt whom he exerciſed ſuch Cruelty. In a Word, Had he not died, he had not conquered Death, nor led Captivity captive. For St. *Paul* tells us expreſly, that the Son of God was made like unto us, and took a Mortal Nature upon him, *that by Death he might deſtroy him that had the Power of Death, even the Devil,* and releaſe them, who through *Fear of Death, were all their Life long ſubject to Bondage.* Thus did the Wicked One fall *into his own Snare*, and *in the ſame Net that he hid privily, was his own Foot taken*; His Devices *returned upon his own Head*, and his Miſchiefs *fell upon his own Pate.* So vain and blind are all the Counſels of Men, ſo impotent all the Cunning and Subtlety of Hell it ſelf, when they undertake to fight againſt God. And, what was eminently viſible in the Death of our Bleſſed Saviour, The Propheſies they fulfilled to a Tittle, while they did all in their Power to evacuate them; The Divine Counſels, which they unawares effected, and the quite contrary Ends they ſerved to what they hoped and laboured to have done; though it be the moſt glorious, the moſt conſpicuous, yet is it far from being the only, Inſtance of a Wonderful, Wiſe, and Almighty Providence, bringing Good out of Evil, and excellent and moſt beneficial Events, out of moſt unlikely, moſt ungodly, moſt malicious Intentions. This every diligent Obſerver will find Inſtances of, frequent enough to convince any thinking Man, that, how caſual ſoever things at firſt ſight may appear, yet there is *One who ruleth over all*, and *worketh after the Counſell of his own Will.* And, how ſucceſsful or formidable

Heb. ii. 14.

Pſal. ix. 14.

ſoever the Enemies of Truth and Goodneſs may ſeem in our Eyes, yet they cannot bind the Hands, nor croſs the Purpoſes, of the great Governor of the World. He will aſſert his own Honour, and do Right to his ſuffering and injured Servants; and even then, when the Wicked think themſelves moſt ſecure, ſhew them their Folly, and blaſt them with the Breath of his Diſpleaſure. Bleſſed therefore be his wiſe and watchful Providence, which thus conſults his own Honour, and the Good of his Beloved Ones, by dark and myſterious Ways! Bleſſed be that admirable Management and Skill, which turns even the Obſtinacy of Wicked Men, and their Attempts againſt Religion, into Means of promoting and ſecuring It! Bleſſed for ever be that amazing Goodneſs, which turned an unexampled Murther into a moſt precious Sacrifice, transformed the Ignominy of the Croſs into a Banner of Honour and Triumph; And, when the Princes and Rulers, with *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate*, were gathered againſt Him and his Chriſt, looked down from Heaven with Scorn, and had them in Deriſion; put a Hook in their Noſe, and a Bridle in their Lips, and, while they gratified their own implacable Malice, ſuffered that Malice to ſuggeſt no other things to them, than what himſelf had long ago determined, and his Prophets foretold ſhould be ſo done. Bleſſed be that Wiſdom, which thus made Sin inſtrumental to deſtroy Sin; that, of the Blood ſhed by wicked Hands, opened a Fountain to waſh away Uncleanneſs; and appointed the Holy *Jeſus*, treated as a vile Malefactor, for a Prince and Saviour, nay for the only, the efficacious Author of Eternal Salvation, to all that ſincerely believe and obey him! Bleſſed, *Laſtly*, be that Truth, which thus preſerved an exact Harmony between the Law and the Goſpel, the Prophecies and the reſpective Accompliſhments, that crowned the Shadows of the Levitical Diſpenſation with their proper Subſtance; that provided *a Lamb which did* indeed *take away the Sins of*

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the World; and ſuffered no one Circumſtance to be wanting in this Death; which could be neceſſary to make good the Promiſes, or ſatisfy the Juſtice, or convince Men of the Love and Goodneſs, of God.

Wedneſday before Eaſter.

The EPISTLE.

Hebr. ix. 16.

16. *WHere a Teſtament is, there muſt alſo of neceſſity be the death of the Teſtator.*

PARAPHRASE.

16. I had ſaid, that the Promiſe of Eternal Inheritance was received by means of Death. And this is agreeable to the Condition of all other Inheritances conveyed by Will, and of all Covenants ratified with Blood.

17. *For a Teſtament is of force after men are dead; otherwiſe it is of no ſtrength at all, while the Teſtator liveth.*

17. While the Devifor lives he may alter his Will; and therefore his Death muſt be proved, to give the Will Force. And in Covenants, till the Blood was ſhed, no Bargain was ſtruck.

18. *Whereupon neither the firſt Teſtament was dedicated without blood.*

18. The Neceſſity of this Bloodſhedding God plainly ſignified, in the Rites, by which the Former (the Levitical) Covenant was made. *Exod.* xxiv.

19. *But when Moſes had ſpoken every precept to all the people, according to the Law: he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and ſcarlet wooll, and hyſſop, and ſprinkled both the book and all the people.*

20. *Saying, This is the blood of the Teſtament which God hath enjoined unto you.*

21. *Moreover, he ſprinkled likewiſe with blood both the tabernacle, and all the veſſels of the miniſtry.*

22. *And almoſt all things are by the Law purged with blood: and without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion.*

22. Some few excepted, as Metals, which were purified by Fire, and Clothes by Water. See *Numb.* xxxi. 23. *Levit.* xvi. 28. The reſt were purified by being ſprinkled with Blood.

23. Thus did Men gain Access to that Sanctuary, which was a Type of Heaven; but to procure them Admittance into Heaven it self, a nobler Blood (even that of Christ) was necessary.

23. *It was therefore necessary, that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

24. *For Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven it self, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

25. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high Priest entreth into the holy place, every year with blood of others:*

26. For since his appearing before God on our behalf is a Consequence of shedding his Blood; had he often entred into the heavenly Sanctuary (as the High Priest did into the earthly one) he must have died often in order to each Entrance.

26. *(For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

27. But in this regard too he was like other Men, who die but once.

27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

28. At his First Appearance he was our Sacrifice for Sin, but at his Second he shall come without any such offering; to bestow that Salvation, which the Sacrifice of himself at his First Coming purchased for all that trust in, and expect it from, him.

28. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.*

COMMENT.

THE Apostle had said, in the Verse next before, that Christ is the *Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of Death they which are called might receive* Remission of Sins, and *the promise of eternal Inheritance.* He proceeds here to shew the Necessity of Christ's Death in order to that purpose. The Nature of which Argument, it may be convenient to illustrate, according to the Twofold Sense of the Original Word, as it is capable of being rendred a Testament, or a Covenant.

If

If we take it in the Former Signification, our dying Redeemer is the Teſtator; The Legacy or Inheritance bequeathed to us is Immortality in Heaven, expreſſed thus by himſelf, *Father, I will that they whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory, which thou haſt given me:* And the Title we have to this Happineſs, is that Death of his, which *opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers.* By this Importance of the Word is intimated to us the Freedom of the Gift; but then our Duty is implied in it likewiſe: It being a known Rule in all Teſtamentary Laws, that He, who takes the Benefit of any Legacy, does by that very Act oblige himſelf to, and become anſwerable for, all the Conditions, upon which it pleaſed the Deceaſed, that ſuch Benefit ſhould be ſuſpended. And in this Latitude, the Expreſſion comes very little ſhort of that more uſual Notion of the Original Word, and which comes next to be conſidered, That of a Covenant. John xviii 24.

Thus, it is evident, we muſt underſtand it, at the 20th Verſe here, and indeed in moſt places where the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts have thought fit to make uſe of it. Nor is this, I conceive, any incommodious Senſe even of the 16th and 17th Verſes, which yet do, more than any other Paſſage, incline to that Other Acceptation of a Teſtament, ſtrictly ſo called. For the method of making Covenants heretofore is known almoſt every where to have been by ſlaying of Beaſts, A ſignificant Ceremony, implying a ſort of Confeſſion, that the Contractors deſerved to be, and an Execration, or Wiſh that they might be, treated by Divine Vengeance, as thoſe Beaſts then were, in caſe they proved falſe to the Compacts, ratified between them in ſo ſolemn a manner.

With like Formalities the Author of this Epiſtle does here put the *Hebrews* in mind, that the Covenant, made with their Anceſtors by the Law of *Moſes*, was eſtabliſhed. Deſigned on that occaſion too, no doubt, to awa-

ken in them a Senſe of the Death due to all, who ſhould preſume to violate it. Thus far, as the Rite, ſo the Meaning of it, was common to That, with all other Covenants. But it had beſides a peculiar Importance here, by which the Parties indenting with God were given to underſtand, that he would not remit Sins without a vicarious Death; And, that thoſe Beaſts then ſlain in Sacrifice, were Figures of a Death to be ſuffered, and of Blood to be ſhed, for the Ranſom of their Souls; as well as Implications of the Puniſhments they had incurred, and muſt otherwiſe have endured, in their own Perſons.

But the Apoſtle puts this Difference between the New or Evangelical, and all other Covenants, that, although God ſtill continued to uſe the ſame Method of ratifying with Blood, yet he did not make uſe of the ſame Blood. There it was the Blood of Goats and Calves, Here the Blood of his own Son made Man, that intervened. A commutation nobler, in proportion as the Benefits contracted for were better. But ſtill the Rule held true, that *without ſhedding of Blood is no Remiſſion.* The Mediator therefore muſt Die, or no Covenant could be ſtruck: And conſequently, the neceſſity of Dying to give effect to this Contract, being equal with That of rendring a Laſt Will valid; Matters in neither caſe being immutably fixed till ſuch Death be over; I apprehend not any Violence done, either to the Apoſtle's Argument, or to the Text it ſelf, by keeping to the more common Signification of the Word; and, by *Teſtament* and *Teſtator* (*Ver.* 16, 17.) underſtanding a Covenant, and the Perſon, whoſe Death is made the Means of ratifying that Covenant.

Ver. 22.

The Reaſon of this Difference in the Inſtrument of confirming the New Covenant we have at the 23d Verſe. *It was neceſſary that the Patterns of things in the Heavens ſhould be purified with theſe, but the heavenly things themſelves with better Sacrifices than theſe.*

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By the Former, ſome underſtand the Levitical, By the Latter, the Goſpel-Oeconomy. Others, The Perſons belonging to each of Theſe, The Synagogue and the Church: But, I preſume, no Interpretation will better ſuit the deſign of the Argument, and the intent of thoſe other Paſſages, where the like Expreſſion occurs, than that of the *Jewiſh* Tabernacle or Sanctuary, and Heaven it ſelf.

There lies indeed one Difficulty againſt this Expoſition; It ſeeming harſh to ſay, that Heaven, the Region and Source of all Purity, ſhould it ſelf either need, or receive, Cleanſing or Purification, from any Sacrifice whatſoever. But this will be removed, if we attend to the true Intent of the Word, with regard to the Tabernacle and Sanctuary. Now Theſe, and all the Utenſils belonging to them, were Conſecrated in moſt ſolemn manner, and could not be rendred more Holy, by the frequent Sprinklings of the Blood of the Sacrifices. The Blemiſhes then, and Stains done away by Them, were the Impurities, not of the Place, but of the Perſons approaching it; and the Altar and Sanctuary were then ſaid to be purified, when the Prieſts and People were put in a due Legal Capacity of holding Communion with Almighty God there. By parity of Reaſon, and in alluſion to thoſe Types, Heaven may be thought *purified*, (according to the Levitical Conſtruction of the Word) when the Bodies and Souls of Men, deſigned to approach God there, are Waſhed from the Pollution of their Sins, which incapacitated them for that Bleſſed Dwelling; And, being Sprinkled with the Blood of the Lamb, are qualified for being brought into the Preſence of Him, who accepts them in the Beloved. This is a Privilege, which He only could confer; A Cleanſing, which no other Sacrifice ever did, ever could effect. A Point at large aſſerted in the Scriptures very fitly Read to us at, and about this Seaſon; and formerly aſſigned to This, as a proper time for taking it into Conſideration.

Now in this Point, there are Two Parts contained, The Inſufficiency of the Legal, *Firſt*; And *Then*, The Perfection and Efficacy of the Evangelical, Sacrifice. Somewhat concerning Each of Theſe, with all convenient Brevity and Plainneſs.

1. *Firſt*, For the Inſufficiency of the Legal Sacrifices; This Epiſtle contains ſundry Arguments, which are very clear and full Proofs of it. In the *Seventh* Chapter, by ſhewing, that the Law is changed by reaſon of its being defective in this reſpect, and grounding this Inference upon thoſe Paſſages of the Old Teſtament, which ſpeak of the *Meſſiah*, not only as a Prieſt more excellent than any other, but as a Prieſt deſcended of a Tribe, none of which had any right to miniſter in Holy things, and of an Order altogether diſtinct from, and foreign to, the Conſtitution of the Levetical Oeconomy. Obſerve this Author's Reaſoning: *If Perfection were by the Levitical Prieſthood, (for under it the People received the Law) what farther need was there,* Heb. vii. 11-19. *that another Prieſt ſhould riſe after the order of Melchiſedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For, the Prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the Law. For he of whom theſe things are ſpoken, pertaineth to another Tribe, of which no Man gave attendance at the Altar. For it is evident, that our Lord ſprang out of Judah, of which Tribe Moſes ſpake nothing concerning the Prieſthood. And it is yet far more evident; for that after the ſimilitude of Melchiſedec there ariſeth another Prieſt, Which is made, not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the power of an endleſs Life. For he teſtifieth, Thou art a Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec. For there is verily a diſannulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof. For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

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He proves it again in the *Eighth* Chapter, from the Forgiveneſs of Sins, and the more compleat knowledge of God and Men's Duty, being by their own Prophets foretold, as Bleſſings properly belonging to a New Covenant, which God in its proper Seaſon promiſed to make with them. And the Conſequence he draws from hence is, that God *finds fault with, and aboliſhes the Old; that, if that First Covenant had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the Second.* And thus he eſtabliſhes the truth of what he had affirmed juſt before, that Chriſt *hath obtained a more excellent Miniſtry, by how much alſo he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes.* So agreeable is all this to the Obſervation of S. *Paul* elſewhere, that if *Righteouſneſs* had *come by the Law, then Chriſt is dead in vain. i. e.* Upon this Suppoſition, there was no manner of need for that Death: And all the Proviſion for Pardon made by it, and all the Weight laid upon it, end in the moſt ſuperfluous, the moſt abſurd Contrivance, that ever was in the World.

Ch. viii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

7, 8.

6.

Gal. ii. 21.

In this *Ninth*, and at the beginning of the *Tenth* Chapter, the Apoſtle produces a farther Evidence of the Inſufficiency of thoſe Legal Sacrifices, particularly, of that moſt Solemn one in the Great Day of Atonement, in that they were, by expreſs Order, frequently repeated. Some of them making a part of the daily Worſhip, Others having their ſtated returns upon particular Days and Occaſions. *The Prieſts* (he urges) *went always into the firſt Tabernacle, accompliſhing the Service of God; And into the Second went the High-Prieſt alone once every Year, not without Blood, which he offered for himſelf and for the Errours of the People.* From whence he draws the following Inference,

Hebr. x. 11.

Hebr. ix. 6.

x. 6.

Inference, that *the Law can never with thoſe Sacrifices, which are offered Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect.* For *then*, would they not (the meaning is, undoubtedly they would) *have ceaſed to be offered? becauſe that the worſhippers once purged ſhould have had no more conſcience of Sins. But in thoſe Sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of Sins every Year.* This rendred them not ſo properly Cures as Convictions of Guilt, and Repreſentations, rather than Remedies, of the Sinner's danger. Each repetition confeſſed the Impotence of the former Act, and reproached that Ordinance with Weakneſs, which left Men under a neceſſity of freſh Expiations. Nor will it ſuffice to anſwer, (as the *Jews* do upon this Occaſion) that, where the Sins themſelves are repeated, it is needful, that the Propitiations for them ſhould be ſo too. For the certain Character of a perfect Sacrifice is to be of inherent and eternal Efficacy; not limited to Times, not invalidated by the return of the Diſeaſe; not to be offered, but only to be applied anew, by ſuch Acts of Faith and Contrition, as the Party's Infirmities or Relapſes ſhall render expedient, for making that effectual to Him in particular, whoſe Efficacy, in it ſelf, and generally ſpeaking, is perpetual.

Ch. x. 1, 2, 3.

Thus are the Legal Sacrifices convicted of Diſability; And the Other Branch of the Matter now before us, The Sufficiency of the Evangelical Sacrifice, is at the ſame time eſtabliſhed, by having thoſe very Perfections attributed to it, which are ſo juſtly denied to the Legal, when ſet in oppoſition to it. For to this purpoſe it is, that ſo much care is taken, for ſhewing our Lord's to be an endleſs Prieſthood; that the Blood he ſhed, as our Mediator in this Affair, is ſtiled *the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant*; that he is ſaid to put *away Sin*, by *the Sacrifice of himſelf in theſe laſt days, and in the end of the World*, (that is, as I have formerly

Ch. v. vi. vi.
xiii. 20.
Ch. i. 2.
ix. 25.

formerly explained thoſe Terms, in this Diſpenſation, to which no other ſhall, becauſe no better can, ſucceed) that he ſhall indeed come again, but not as he did before, not to *be made Sin*, (that is, in the quality of a Sin-Offering) *for us* any more; but *without Sin*, without any ſuch Propitiatory Sacrifice, *unto Salvation*; to beſtow the Bleſſings purchaſed at his firſt Coming; not then a Redeemer, but as a Rewarder of Perſons already compleatly Redeemed. Hence ſo much Streſs is laid upon this Offering being not made often, becauſe the Force of it is ſo far above needing any Repetition: *He by his own Blood entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* *He hath appeared* once *to take away Sin*, and *was once offered to bear the Sins of many. We are ſanctified through the Offering of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt* once for all. *And this Man after he had offered, One Sacrifice for Sins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God. For by One Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are Sanctified.* The Merit and Influence of this Oblation was not confined to the Age in which it was made, but had a Retroſpect to Generations long ſince paſt and gone, and ſupplied the Deficiencies of former Diſpenſations. For therefore is Chriſt *the Mediator of the New Teſtament, that by means of Death, for the Redemption of the Tranſgreſſions under the Firſt Teſtament, they which are called might receive the promiſe of eternal Inheritance.* And it looks forward to all Generations yet unborn, for the *Promiſe* (ſays S. *Peter*) *is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call.* And He (ſays S. *Paul*) *being made perfect, and conſecrated for evermore, became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him*; For

Epiſtle for *Chriſtmas-Day*.

ix. 28.

ix. 12, 26, 28.

x. 10, 12. 14.

ix. 15.

Acts ii. 39.

Hebr. v. 9.

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vii. 21, 25. *he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to God by Him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.* In a word, On this account are the Sacraments of the Chriſtian Religion Memorials of a Propitiation already made, and Applications of its Efficacy, and Teſtimonies of our Faith and Thankfulneſs, not any Offering of Chriſt again, but an Offering of our Selves to God, by, and for him.

There is yet one Argument behind, which the Apoſtle inſiſts upon with great force, taken from the Reaſon and Nature of the Thing. For thus we find him confining the Effect of Bulls and Goats ſlain in Sacrifice, to the

Ch. ix. 13, 14. *purifying of the Fleſh*, but aſcribing to the *Blood of Chriſt* alone, that of *cleanſing the Conſcience from dead works.* And, in Terms yet more expreſſive and peremptory, pronouncing it *not poſſible,*

x. 4. *that the Blood of Bulls and Goats ſhould take away Sin.* The Strength and Ground of which Aſſertion we ſhall beſt underſtand, by obſerving what is meant in Scripture by *taking away Sin*, and then by that Impoſſibility of doing ſo, which the Legal Sacrifices are here concluded under.

Now to *take away Sin* is a Phraſe, which, in Scripture Language, denotes the freeing any Perſon from the Guilt of Sins already committed, ſo as that they ſhall not any more be charged to him in Account, or he ſuffer the Puniſhment otherwiſe due for them. And when, as here it is, applied to Sacrifices, the meaning is, that ſuch Puniſhment is ſo far inflicted on Them, that God accepts the Death of the Sacrifice, and, in conſideration of this, remits the Death of the Offender, in whoſe behalf and ſtead ſuch Sacrifice was ſlain. That then which the Apoſtle aſſerts, comes to thus much. That Chriſt, by Offering himſelf, and Dying for Mankind, hath releaſed us from the Guilt and Puniſhment of our Sins: But that the Beaſts ſlain in Sacrifice under the Law, did

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not by Their Death releaſe Men, nay that they could not poſſibly do ſo.

By which Expreſſion, as I have lately had occaſion to explain it, we need not, we muſt not, underſtand an abſolute Impoſſibility; as if God could not either remit Sins without any Satisfaction at all; or accept any that he thought fit, how mean and worthleſs ſoever in it ſelf. For, Who ſhall preſume to limit the Supreme Governour's Prerogative, or preſcribe to the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of a Being, Infinite in every Perfection? But the meaning is, that according to the Scheme, upon which God all along hath acted, and, conſidering him in the Quality of a Lawgiver and a Judge; a Nobler Compenſation was neceſſary; And for the Blood of Beaſts to have been accepted, in lieu of the Puniſhment due for the Sins of Men, had been extreamly incongruous, and ſuch a method of Remiſſion, as the Ends and Meaſures of Government could not have been anſwered by.

The Deſign of every Wiſe Governour is to contain Men in their Duty, by enacting ſuch Laws, as may be a Rule for their Obedience, and enforcing thoſe Laws with ſuch Puniſhments, as ſhall render the Breach of them terrible and exemplary; that Others may be deterred from doing the like, that They who have already offended may be afraid to do ſo again, and that a juſt Reverence for the Conſtitution may be preſerved and maintained.

To theſe purpoſes Almighty God having made Man Immortal, gave him a Law, the Tranſgreſſion whereof he threatned with Death, of which we all have naturally the utmoſt Abhorrence and Dread. That Law being broken by our Firſt Parents, They, and in Them Humane Nature, became obnoxious to the Curſe. To preſerve his Workmanſhip in ſo noble a part of the Creation from periſhing, it pleaſed God to accept of a Vicarious Puniſhment. But, ſince God ſtill continues to

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Govern us by Laws, it was expedient, this ſhould be ſuch a one, as ſtill to ſerve the Ends abovementioned, which does not appear poſſible to be done by admitting the Death of Beaſts, but is effectually done by receiving the Death of Chriſt, as an Expiation for the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sinners.

For, What apprehenſion of Divine Vengeance, What Terrour, What Example can there be, in the Death of a Brute, which cannot be of any great Conſequence to us, or ſtir any very tender Paſſion in us? To ſee a Creature die, when devoted to a Holy uſe, will not much affect them, who every Day kill the like for their own Suſtenance and Refreſhment. To purchaſe Pardon at ſo cheap a rate would rather render Men Licentious, and encourage their Wickedneſs, and expoſe their Laws and Governour to contempt; but could never produce Reformation of Manners, or any ſort of Reverence for ſuch an Inſtitution. For, when aſſaulted by Temptations, any who allow themſelves leiſure to think on ſuch Occaſions, will preſently ſet to computing the Damage like to follow by unlawful Compliances. And if it be found, upon balancing the Account, that a Bullock or a Sheep is all the Loſs they have to fear, Few Sins bid ſo low, as not to gain them over. And the Affront to the Majeſty of God is not likely to be eſteemed great, or the Honour for his Ordinances worth any very nice regard, when ſo poor a Reparation is taken up with, and the Quarrel compounded, without any perſonal Pain, and at ſo deſpicably ſlight Expence.

On the contrary, God, by accepting no leſs a Compenſation for the Sins of Men, than the Death and Paſſion of his own Innocent and Beloved Son, hath given us the cleareſt Idea of the Heinouſneſs of Sin, and the Fierceneſs of his Anger againſt it. And by the diſmal Circumſtances of that Paſſion, he hath rendred the Puniſhment of it moſt Exemplary, hath awakened our Fears, and put us upon our Guard againſt that Ruine

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and Misery, which must needs be insupportable to the Guilty, when the weight of his Wrath lay so heavy upon One, who had none of Their Remorse and Despair to Sink him. For, How shall Sinners be able to endure to all Eternity the unrelenting Strokes of that provoked Justice, which He, who had no Fault to reproach himself with, found so hard to be born for a few Hours only? And greater right was done to his Laws and his Honour by God, in Bruising this excellent Person so sorely, than if each Transgressour and Affronter of them had actually perished for his own Iniquities. For, What are Millions of Us in comparison of Him? And how could God secure a respect to his Laws, like That, which results from a Ransom so inestimably Precious, and the high Terms upon which alone he was content, that we could be retrieved from everlasting Destruction? These things are so very plain, and have been heretofore so largely spoken to, that I may very well forbear any farther proof of them at this time.

But besides, There is in all this Dispensation an exact Congruity observed, which could not be in any other Sacrifices. Humane Nature had Sinned, and was it not fit that Humane Nature should Suffer? Beasts are nothing to Us; but *Jesus*, in condescending to become one of us, gave us thereby a Part and Interest in all he Did and Suffered. Here was Equity, as well as Condescension, that the same Nature, which Suffered in Him, should receive in Us the Benefit of its Sufferings. Nor does it appear, how that Benefit could ever accrue to us from the Sufferings of any Nature inferiour to our own. For, Death being ordained the Punishment of Sin, the Effect of Remission of Sin must be Immortal Life. And could the Death of any Creature, not Immortal it self, procure for Us a right to Immortality? No. The Sacrifice, that takes away Sin, must not only die, but live again: Must be able to give it self Immortality, before we can be Immortal by virtue

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of it. And This proves, that ſuch Sacrifice muſt at laſt be Man, muſt be an innocent Man, muſt indeed be much more than Man, muſt be God, as well as Man. For the Scripture is expreſs, that God *only hath Immortality*. And it is evident to common Senſe, that a Being which it ſelf hath not Immortality, cannot give it to others.

1 Tim. vi. 16.

By this time, I hope, the Apoſtle's reaſoning is clear, even to a Demonſtration, wherein he aſſerts the Weakneſs and Inefficacy of the Levitical, and every other Sacrifice, and the Sufficience and Perfection of Chriſt's, the Evangelical, the only efficacious, the only true One. And, how can we enough admire the Riches of that Grace, which choſe this method of making his Glory ſo conſpicuous, in every adorable Attribute, concerned in this great Work? Moſt truly does the Apoſtle declare, that *Jeſus Chriſt is* become *to us Wiſdom, and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification, as well as Redemption.* O may theſe kind Intentions be accompliſhed in every Soul, and may that *God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our* Lord *Jeſus Chriſt, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant; make us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in us that which is well pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

1 Cor. i. 30.

Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xxii.

1. NOW *the feaſt of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Paſſover.*

2. *And the chief Prieſts and Scribes ſought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.*

3. *Then entred Satan into Judas, ſirnamed Iſcariot, being of the number of the twelve.*

4. *And*

4. *And he went his way, and communed with the chief Priests and Captains, how he might betray him unto them.*

5. *And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.*

6. *And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.*

7. *Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed.*

8. *And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go, and prepare for us the Passover, that we may eat.*

9. *And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?*

10. *And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entred into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water, follow him into the house where he entreth in.*

11. *And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my Disciples?*

12. *And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished, there make ready.*

13. *And they went, and found as he had said unto them, and they made ready the Passover.*

14. *And when the hour was come, he sate down, and the twelve Apostles with him.*

15. *And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*

16. *For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*

17. *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among your selves.*

18. *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*

19. *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me.*

20. *Likewise also the cup after supper, Saying, This cup is the new Testament in my Blood which is shed for you.*

21. *But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the table.*

22. *And truly the Son of man goeth as it was determined, but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.*

23. *And they began to enquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing.*

24. *And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.*

25. *And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.*

26. *But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.*

27. *For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.*

28. *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.*

29. *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.*

30. *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on Thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

31. *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*

32. *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren.*

33. *And he ſaid unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into priſon, and to death.*

34. *And he ſaid, I tell thee, Peter, the cock ſhall not crow this day, before that thou ſhalt thrice deny that thou knoweſt me.*

35. *And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent you without purſe, and ſcrip, and ſhoes, lacked ye any thing? And they ſaid, Nothing.*

36. *Then ſaid he unto them, But now he that hath a purſe, let him take it, and likewiſe his ſcrip: and he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment and buy one.*

37. *For I ſay unto you, That this that is written muſt yet be accompliſhed in me; And he was reckoned among the tranſgreſſors: For the things concerning me have an end.*

38. *And they ſaid, Lord, behold here are two ſwords. And he ſaid unto them, It is enough.*

39. *And he came out, and went as he was wont, to the mount of Olives, and his Diſciples alſo followed him.*

40. *And when he was at the place, he ſaid unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*

41. *And he was withdrawn from them about a ſtones caſt, and kneeled down, and prayed,*

42. *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done.*

43. *And there appeared an Angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthening him.*

44. *And being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly, and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

45. *And when he roſe up from prayer, and was come to his Diſciples, he found them ſleeping for ſorrow,*

46. *And ſaid unto them, Why ſleep ye? Riſe, and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.*

47. *And while he yet ſpake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jeſus to kiſs him.*

48. *But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs?*

49. *When they which were about him, ſaw what would follow, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite with the ſword?*

50. *And one of them ſmote the ſervant of the high Prieſt, and cut off his right ear.*

51. *And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, Suffer ye thus far, and he touched his ear, and healed him.*

52. *Then Jeſus ſaid unto the chief Prieſts, and captains of the Temple, and the Elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves?*

53. *When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye ſtretched forth no hands againſt me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.*

54. *Then they took him, and led him, and brought him into the high Prieſts houſe, and Peter followed afar off.*

55. *And when they had kindled a fire in the midſt of the hall, and were ſet down together, Peter ſat down among them.*

56. *But a certain maid beheld him as he ſat by the fire, and earneſtly looked upon him, and ſaid, This man was alſo with him.*

57. *And he denied him, ſaying, Woman, I know him not.*

58. *And after a little while another ſaw him, and ſaid, Thou art alſo of them. And Peter ſaid, Man, I am not.*

59. *And about the ſpace of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, ſaying, Of a truth this fellow alſo was with him, for he is a Galilean.*

60. *And Peter ſaid, Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt. And immediately while he yet ſpake, the cock crew.*

61. *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembred the word of the Lord, how he had ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.*

62. *And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

63. *And the men that held Jeſus mocked him, and ſmote him.*

64. *And when they had blindfolded him, they ſtrook him on the face, and asked him, ſaying, Propheſie, who is it that ſmote thee?*

65. *And many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him.*

66. *And aſſoon as it was day, the Elders of the people, and the chief Prieſts and the Scribes came together, and led him into their Council, ſaying,*

67. *Art thou the Chriſt? Tell us. And he ſaid unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe.*

68. *And if I alſo ask you, you will not anſwer me, nor let me go.*

69. *Hereafter ſhall the Son of man ſit on the right hand of the power of God.*

70. *Then ſaid they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he ſaid unto them, Ye ſay that I am.*

71. *And they ſaid, What need we any farther witneſs? For we our ſelves have heard of his own mouth.*

COMMENT.

MY Purpoſe is at preſent to treat of the Lord's Supper: Of which this Goſpel relates the Inſtitution, and the Church requires from every Member, of proper Years and Underſtanding, a devout Participation, at the approaching Feſtival of *Eaſter*.

The many uſeful Tracts upon this Subject, (ſome One whereof, at leaſt, is almoſt in every hand) have rendred any great Enlargement of mine unneceſſary. That therefore, which will beſt agree with the Nature of this Work, and abundantly ſuffice for the Deſign I have in view, is,

Firſt, To conſider the Manner, and the End of inſtituting this Sacrament; And then

Secondly, To draw from thence ſome Practical Reflections with relation to it.

In Both theſe I intend to be very Brief and Plain; and to frame my Diſcourſe entirely upon our own Communion Service: Than which, if carefully attended to, I am bold to affirm, all the Volumes that have been (or perhaps that ever ſhall be) written on this Occaſion, cannot give more clear, and pious, and profitable Inſtructions.

I begin with the Manner of Inſtituting this Sacrament. The *Firſt* remarkable Circumſtance in which, is, Its being done at the Cloſe of the Paſchal Supper. That, (I need not ſay) was ordained, as a yearly Commemoration of God's great Mercy, In ſparing the Families of the *Iſraelites*, when his Angel deſtroyed the Firſt-born of the *Egyptians*: And ſo bringing off his own People, in Safety and Triumph, from a State of Bondage and inſupportable Miſery. This Bleſſing, great as it was, did yet prefigure One infinitely greater: Which all Mankind were now about to receive by the Death of Chriſt. Who, in Alluſion to that eminent Type, is called the *Lamb of God*, and *Our Paſſover*: He therefore, having firſt ſatisfied the Law in celebrating the Jewiſh, proceeds to ſubſtitute Another Feaſt in its room: That, as the reſt of Their imperfect Ordinances were ſwallowed up in Him, ſo the Commemoration of the Subſtance might give place to that of the Image. Whereby it is eaſy to perceive, not only the Fitneſs of ſuch an Appointment in general, but the great Affinity it had to a Former Eſtabliſhment, and the ſeaſonableneſs of appointing this Sacrament at that Time.

John i. 29. 1 Cor. v. 7.

Secondly, Our Lord, upon this Occaſion, *took Bread, and bleſſed, and brake it, and ſaid, This is my Body, which is given (and broken) for you.* Here again is a very near Reſemblance to the Rites of the Jewiſh Paſſover. In which the Maſter of the Family was wont in general to give God ſolemn Thanks for the Fruits of the Earth; acknowledging

Ver. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

knowledging Him to be the Creator and Beſtower of them: And then, applying himſelf to the Occaſion of that Feſtival, and taking the Unleavened Bread into his Hand, he ſaid, *This is the Bread of Affliction, which our Fathers did eat in Egypt.* A Form, which muſt in all Reaſon be admitted, for the beſt Key to That ſo very near of kin to it, by which our Saviour conſecrated Bread to a Sacramental Uſe under the New Teſtament. And ſeems plainly to ſignify, that neither the One, nor the Other, is ſtrictly and literally the thing it is called; but a Memorial only and Repreſentation of that thing, whoſe Name it bears. Nor was it indeed poſſible, that the Bread in Chriſt's Hand could be in reality his Body broken, at a time when his Body was not yet broken; but the breaking of the Bread was a proper Figure, and a lively Image of thoſe Wounds and Breaches, which were about to be made in his Body. Thus it was to thoſe Diſciples then; And thus it is now to Us, by repreſenting them already made. And of this manner of Speech the Scripture furniſhes other Inſtances in Caſes of like Nature: As God himſelf to *Abraham* ſays of Circumciſion, *This is my Covenant*, though *Abraham* was not then actually circumciſed. And when he was ſo, it is evident from St. *Paul*, that Circumciſion never was the Covenant it ſelf, but only the Evidence and Seal of it. And *Moſes*, in like manner, ſays of the Paſchal Lamb, *It is the Lord's Paſſover*, when yet the Lord had not paſſed over their Dwellings, till that Lamb was actually killed, and their Doors ſprinkled with its Blood. And afterwards, that Lamb could be no other than the Memorial of his Paſſing over them. So clearly it appears, that the Sign hath often the Title of the Thing ſignified; and, that it hath the Name and Significance of a thing to be done, as well as of a thing already done. This is a Figure uſual in any Caſe, but moſt natural and in a manner neceſſary,

Gen. xvii. 10.

Rom. iv. 11.

Exod. xii. 11.

where a Sacrament is the Subject. The very Condition of which implies, that the thing repreſenting, and that repreſented by it, be different; It being manifeſtly abſurd, to make any thing a Sign of it ſelf. And, that we might lie under no Temptation to underſtand our Saviour's Words, in a Senſe different from thoſe other Forms I mentioned, he ſeems to have ſufficiently explained his own meaning, by that Addition, *Do this* (take, and break, and eat Bread) *in remembrance of me.* To which Interpretation St. *Paul* agrees exactly, as I ſhall have occaſion to obſerve by and by.

3. The ſame is to be ſaid, *Thirdly*, concerning the Other part of this Sacrament. Where our Bleſſed Saviour, *after Supper, took the Cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my Blood of the New Teſtament which is ſhed for you, and for many, for the remiſſion of Sins.* Or, as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, in the Goſpel now before us, *This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood, which is ſhed for you.* The Cup here correſponds to the Jews Cup of Bleſſing, at the Cloſe of the Paſchal Feaſt; which is now converted to a nobler and better Signification, in the Uſe Chriſtians are commanded to make of it. But by the manner of Expreſſion it is evident, that by the Cup was intended the Wine in it; that this Wine is the *Blood of the New Teſtament*, or the *New Teſtament in Chriſt's Blood*, no farther, than, as it repreſents and commemorates that Blood, and the Covenant ratified by the ſhedding of it. Which Blood yet was not ſhed, at the Time, when this Cup firſt received that Denomination. And therefore here again, to ſet us right, St. *Paul* adds thoſe other Words of our Lord, at the Conſecration of it, *Do this, as oft as ye ſhall drink it, in remembrance of me.*

Matth. xxvi. 27, 28.

1 Cor. xi.

Thus did our Lord, the Night before his Paſſion, Thus do his Servants, the Miniſters of his Goſpel, at

every

every Celebration of his Bleſſed Supper, ſeparate and ſanctify the Elements of Bread and Wine to a religious Purpoſe. So changing them in their Uſe and Significance, and devoting them to the more immediate Service of God. In this regard they are no longer what they were before, Common Food to our Bodies only; But they become Holy Memorials of our Redemption, the Strength and Nouriſhment of Souls, and a Feaſt of Thankſgiving, ſet forth upon our Lord's own Table. The mention whereof puts me in mind to proceed to the *Second* Branch of the *Firſt* General Head; the End, I mean, of this happy Inſtitution; which our Church hath declared to be Twofold, in thoſe Words of her ſolemn Exhortation. *To the end we ſhould always remember the exceeding great Love of our Maſter and only Saviour Jeſus Chriſt thus dying for us, and the innumerable Benefits which by his precious Blood-ſhedding he hath obtained to us, he hath inſtituted and ordained holy Myſteries, as Pledges of his Love, and for a continual Remembrance of his Death, to our great and endleſs Comfort.* Now here

Firſt, Let us conſider Theſe Myſteries, as Pledges of his Love. The principal and moſt valuable Effects of Chriſt's Love to Mankind, are Bleſſings of a Spiritual and Inviſible Nature. And becauſe to Men, who in theſe Bodies muſt lead Lives of Senſe, it is difficult to entertain a firm Perſuaſion of things, which do not affect their bodily Organs; Therefore it hath pleaſed God all along to make uſe of Sacraments in Religion. That is (as our Church in her Catechiſm rightly defines) *Outward and viſible Signs, of inward and ſpiritual Graces, ordained by our Lord himſelf, as means whereby we receive the ſame, and pledges to aſſure us thereof.* Theſe then we are commanded to apply, as the Methods made choice of to convey to us the Benefits they betoken: Theſe we are to confide in, as effectual for that Purpoſe; and to reſt aſſured, that the Mercies repreſented by them

are as certainly imparted, by and with them, as thoſe very Signs are which we ſee and feel and taſte: Theſe again we are to conſider, as having that Efficacy and Significance, not from any natural Force and Tendency of their own; but purely from the Ordinance and Inſtitution of God, who appointed the Uſe of them for ſuch particular Purpoſes.

'Tis farther obſervable, concerning all the Ordinances of this kind, That they began to take place upon ſome new Conditions of Obedience impoſed, and as Confirmations to Promiſes of ſome ſignal Advantage, propounded as a Reward of Compliance with the Change or Addition of ſuch Conditions. The Inſtances themſelves make this exceeding plain; For ſuch are to be reckoned, The Tree of Life in Paradiſe, to our firſt Parents: The Bow in the Cloud to *Noah*, after the Flood: Circumciſion to *Abraham*, upon ſeparating Him and his Poſterity to be God's peculiar: The Paſſover, and other Levitical Sacrifices, upon enacting the Law: And, to Us Chriſtians, Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, at the Promulgation of the Goſpel. All agreeing thus far, that, by the Impreſſions made upon our bodily Senſes from Objects fit to affect them; all Doubt might be removed, concerning thoſe Benefits, of which our Senſes can have no Perception; and which do therefore challenge a Right to our Faith (the only Principle qualified to apprehend them) when Evidence of them is made by ſuch Marks and Emblems, as when rightly uſed, God hath determined to beſtow them in Company with.

And This I take to be the true Reaſon of that particular Preſence of Chriſt, in the Sacraments, above what is uſually attributed to other parts of Religious Worſhip: The inſeparable Conjunction of the thing ſignified, with the Sign when rightly adminiſtred; and the ſenſible Proof of that inviſible Benefit made by viſible Signs; for ſuch the Sacraments exhibit to us, but other Acts of Religious Worſhip are deſtitute of. This alſo ſeems to be

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the Apoſtle's Meaning, in that Text to the *Corinthians*; *The Cup of Bleſſing, which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt?* 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* The Cup and Bread at the Holy Table are then the Means of exhibiting, and rendring us Partakers of, his *Body broken* and *his Blood*, (or as himſelf, according to St. *Luke*, was pleaſed to phraſe it) *the New Teſtament in his Blood, ſhed for us.* Of which, if we will ſpeak intelligibly, and ſo as may agree with the Terms, whereby the Evangeliſts and St. *Paul* have ſeverally deſcribed the Act of Inſtitution, it muſt be to like Effect, with the Words of our Church in her Thankſgivings after the Communion. That here we hope, *by the Merits and Death of Jeſus Chriſt, and through Faith in his Blood, to obtain Remiſſion of our Sins, and all other Benefits of his Paſſion.* First Prayer. Or (as the Other Form yet more expreſly) that Them *who have duly received theſe Holy Myſteries, God hath vouchſafed to feed with the Spiritual Food of the moſt precious Body and Blood of his Son our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; and doth aſſure them thereby of his Favour and Goodneſs toward them; and that they are very Members incorporate in the myſtical Body of his Son, which is the Bleſſed Company of all faithful People; and are alſo Heirs through Hope of his everlaſting Kingdom, by the Merits of the moſt precious Death and Paſſion of his dear Son.* Second Prayer. Since then, by communicating in the conſecrated Elements, we partake in the *Body and Blood of Chriſt*, that is, ſince all the Advantages, which his Death was intended to procure for Mankind, are here exhibited and ſealed to every worthy Receiver in particular, no doubt can be made, whether theſe Holy Myſteries be not deſervedly ſtiled *Pledges of* our Dear Redeemer's *Love.*

2. The

2. The Other End of Inſtituting his Sacrament is, that it may be a *continual Remembrance of Chriſt's Death.* This likewiſe is manifeſt, not only from thoſe Words of our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; but by thoſe alſo of S. *Paul*, *As oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come.* If we conſider the Circumſtances of the firſt Chriſtians, their Hardſhips and Perſecutions for the Faith of Chriſt, it muſt be acknowledged, that their making This ſo conſtant a part of their Solemn Worſhip, was an inſtance of a more than common Zeal. The Natural Conſtruction of ſuch a Practice amounting in truth to no leſs, than a Declaration, that they were neither afraid nor aſhamed to confeſs themſelves the Diſciples of a crucified Lord; notwithſtanding all the Cruelty and Contempt, which, it was foreſeen, ſuch Confeſſion would not fail of expoſing them to. It were to be wiſhed, that any Age, that Ours in particular, had ſo juſt a Reverence for Chriſt and his Religion, as might make ſuch open Atteſtations of our Adherence to him, ceaſe to be, even in this reſpect, neceſſary. But, ſuppoſing the whole World agreed in the Regards due to Chriſt and his Doctrine, yet would the moſt publick Declarations of our Thanks ſtill continue a Duty. And, ſince he hath himſelf preſcribed a Method, for preſerving the great things done and ſuffered upon Our account, freſh in the Memories of Men; it will very ill become Them, who are ſo infinitely indebted to his Kindneſs, to decline remembring him, in the way of his own Chooſing. Accordingly, we find this always look'd upon, as the Mark of Diſtinction for his Servants and Followers; The Admiſſion to it eſteemed their higheſt Privilege and Comfort; The Exclusion from it, upon any notorious Crime, dreaded and lamented, as the moſt grievous of all Calamities; and a direful Omen of ſuch Perſons being debarred entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, if it ſhould pleaſe

God to take them away in that miſerable State: An Argument, indeed, that they had *neither Part nor Lot*, in the Sufferings which they were judged unworthy to commemorate. For all remembrance of this kind ſuppoſes an Intereſt in, and Title to, the Bleſſings Men remember. And the matter is greatly miſtaken by Them, who ſuppoſe, that every Calling of Chriſt and his Death to mind is ſufficient to anſwer the Purpoſes of this Inſtitution. For, though our Lord have mentioned no other uſe of this Sacrament expreſly, beſides that of Remembring Him; yet does This ſingly, when conſidered as it ought to be, imply all thoſe pious Acts and Diſpoſitions, which the Treatiſes of Divines upon this Sacrament are uſually obſerved to require, as neceſſary Preparations to it. And This it is my deſign to Explain and Prove under my *Second* General Head, which, I promiſed, ſhould conſiſt of,

II. Some Practical Reflections, relating to this matter.

Now, *Firſt*, By remembring Chriſt and his Death is implied a Remembrance of the End for which he died. Which, the Scriptures acquaint us, was *to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*: Heb. ix. 26. To Deliver us from the Guilt and Puniſhment of it, by Suffering in our ſtead; and to ſet us at Liberty from the Dominion of it, by the Aſſiſtances of his Grace. But the Scriptures do as plainly inform us, that theſe Benefits are confined to the Penitent only; And therefore to pretend to this Remembrance, without ſincere Endeavours to promote that End, is Mockery and Affront to his Sufferings. Conſequently the Remembrance of Chriſt's Death in this Sacrament is an Obligation to hearty Sorrow for our Sins already paſt, to ſtedfaſt Purpoſes of living better for the time to come, and to actual Amendment in purſuit of thoſe good Purpoſes.

Secondly,

Secondly, He, who remembers Chriſt dying for him, is ſuppoſed to have a due Senſe of the Merit and Efficacy of that Death: To believe, That God hath accepted it in full Satisfaction to his offended Juſtice, and ſet him forth as a Propitiation, in whom we have Forgiveneſs and Acceptance. Conſequently, he approaches this Table with aſſured Perſuaſion, that the Great Work of Redemption is accompliſhed: And by this Perſuaſion he feels himſelf invigorated and actuated perpetually. It is like the Soul in his Body, animating every Part: It Influences his whole Behaviour, Supports him under Tryals, arms him againſt Temptations, ſilences his Doubts, lays the Diſquiet of Fears and Miſgivings to ſleep, baniſhes Deſpair utterly; and ſhews him to himſelf, though moſt polluted and unworthy, when conſidered abſtractedly and alone; yet, when conſidered, as one for whom Chriſt died, the Purchaſe of that Blood, which could not be ſhed in vain, and ſure to be accepted in and for the Beloved Son of God. And thus he attains to another Qualification, declared to be neceſſary upon our approaches to the Bleſſed Table, *A lively and ſtedfaſt Faith in Chriſt our Saviour.*

Thirdly, He that remembers the Death of Chriſt, in our Lord's meaning, recollects, that *his Blood* was *ſhed*, and *his Body broken* for Him and for *Many*; Or as St. *John*, in Terms yet more extenſive, that *he is the Propitiation, not for* his *Sins only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World.* And this Reflection cannot fail to awaken thoſe Endearments, which naturally grow from Mens being involved in the ſame common Danger and Miſery, and partaking in the ſame common Deliverance. It will put us in mind, how, by ſuffering in our Nature, he hath united all who ſhare that Nature to himſelf; It will repreſent the Friendſhip due to Them, who are thus made Heirs of the ſame Hope, Sons of the ſame Family, Members of the ſame Body, Waſhed in the ſame Baptiſm, Fed at the

1 Joh. ii. 2.

ſame

ſame Table, with our ſelves. This is the Inference made of it by St. *Paul*, *We being many, are one Bread and one Body, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* 1 Cor. x. 17. It will, in a word, expoſe moſt ſenſibly the Wickedneſs, the Abſurdity, of Hatred, or Revenge, or any malicious Grudge; Of Scorn, or Contempt, or Coldneſs, or Neglect to any, for whom Chriſt did not diſdain to die, as well as for Us. And thus we ſhall arrive at a *Third* neceſſary Predispoſition to Communicating worthily, That of being *in perfect Charity with all Men.*

Fourthly, Remembring Chriſt and his Death, does once more preſume a Man ſenſible, that he muſt have been Miſerable to all Eternity without it; that this was an admirable Contrivance for the ſnatching a whole World out of the Jaws of Death and Hell; that it was an Inſtance of unparallell'd Mercy in God the Father, a moſt amazing Condeſcenſion in God the Son: That they are even Monſters of Ingratitude, who read, and hear, and reflect, who it was that died, and what he endured, and for whom; and ſee the happy Conſequences of his Sufferings; if they do not feel their Hearts wonderfully excited to acknowledge, and magnifie, and publiſh the Praiſes of their Benefactor and only Saviour; If they do not love him in return, or think any thing too much, that he thinks fit to require as a Teſtimony of their Love. And ſince a Perſon ſo far above us is not capable of being thanked any other way, if they do not make it their conſtant ſtudy, to expreſs the grateful Sentiments they have of this ineſtimable Mercy, by Acts of Reverence, and Devotion, Diligence to ſerve and obey him, and the ſtricteſt Care never to diſpleaſe or grieve him. This is a Temper of Mind, which the reaſon of the thing proves to be our Duty at all times. But at the ſeaſons of partaking in our Lord's Body and Blood, it is ſo eſſential, ſo exceeding neceſſary, that then *Above all things, we muſt give*

moſt

moſt humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, for the Redemption of the World by the Death and Paſſion of our Saviour Chriſt, both God and Man. Who did humble himſelf even to the death of the Croſs, for Us miſerable Sinners, who lay in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, that he might make us the Children of God, and exalt us to everlaſting Life.

Such is the Preparation requiſite to this Holy Sacrament; conſiſting of Habits and Diſpoſitions, which whoſoever is deſtitute of cannot be a good Chriſtian. And therefore theſe are not to be acquired, but ſtrengthened only and refreſhed, when Men come hither. And ſince in the working theſe up to as high a degree as we are able, conſiſts the Perfection of a Chriſtian Life, it muſt needs be of great uſe, and ſtrong obligation, that we loſe no Convenience of doing it. The neglect, and the careleſs Receiving of the Lord's Supper, are the Inlets to all manner of Evil: And I know not, whether the ſcandalous Corruption of our own Age and People, be more juſtly imputable to any Cauſe, than the long and general diſuſe of this Sacrament, introduced by the Confuſions and Hypocriſie of the laſt Century. Mean while, ſince this Holy Ordinance hath been proved, not only a Remembrance of our Lord's Death commanded to be perpetual; but alſo a ſure Pledge of his Love: How barbarous are we to our own Souls, in denying them the beſt, the moſt laſting Comfort, of frequently rejoicing in thoſe raviſhing Hopes and Aſſurances, here moſt effectually cheriſhed? If not for Chriſt's ſake then, (which yet were moſt unthankful and baſe) At leaſt for our own, (which not to do were moſt inhumane and ſtupid) let us beware of affronting ſo good a Lord by refuſing his Invitations to ſo much Mercy; and of drawing upon our ſelves the Puniſhment of thoſe unworthy Wretches, who went, *One to his Farm, another to his Merchandiſe*, till they at laſt were finally excluded

Matth. xxii.

excluded from the *Marriage Feaſt of the great King.* Luke xiv.

Laſtly, From what hath gone before on this Occaſion, it is very obvious to obſerve the Reaſonableneſs of that Rubrick in our Liturgy, which contains ſo general a Command of Communicating at *Eaſter*. For, When indeed can it be more properly done, than at this Holy Seaſon? When may we expect more plentiful Supplies of Grace, When do we put our ſelves more directly in the way of it, than by thus doing honour to that Body and Blood, broken and ſhed for us, at the very time when it was actually broken and ſhed?

If ever our Devotions can be exalted to a Pitch in any degree worthy of thoſe bleſſed Myſteries, ſure it muſt be then, when the repeated Contemplation of our Lord's glorious Atchievements for us, have raiſed our heavy Souls, and put them on the wing. If ever our Faith in Chriſt be lively and ſtedfaſt; It is then moſt like to be ſo, when we celebrate his Conqueſt over Death and Hell, and take courage from the Rout now given to His Enemies and Ours. If ever we be touched with deep and tender Remorſe, and melt into penitential Tears, and heartily abhor our Faults and Follies, and our Selves for them; Sure this will be the effect, of reading, hearing, recollecting, our Dear Redeemer's Sufferings; The Bitterneſs of his Bodily Pains, The Anguiſh of his Soul, and The dreadful Puniſhment inflicted upon Sin in His Perſon. If ever the Love of Chriſt commit a holy Violence upon our Hearts, and *conſtrain us to Obedience*; When are we ſo prepared to ſubmit to, and be vanquiſhed by it, as now, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is Crucified in our Ears, and before our Eyes, for a whole Week together; and hath thereby ſo fully poſſeſſed us with Ideas of his moſt aſtoniſhing Kindneſs and Condeſcenſion?

So fit, ſo advantagious a time is This of feeding on the Body of our Lord; So ſcandalous is it, not now to

do

do this in remembrance of Him: So much to be feared, that They do not remember Christ at all to purpose, who refuse this Respect to his Command, his Person, his Sufferings; and cannot be prevailed upon to remember him in the method of his own appointing.

Thursday before Easter.

The EPISTLE.

PARAPHRASE.

1 Cor. ix. 17.

17. One thing I am about to mention, which deserves great blame: It is the disorderly manner of your meeting together upon Religious Accounts.

17. *IN this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together, not for the better, but for the worse.*

18. For I am told, that in these Assemblies there are some of you, who divide from the rest and eat separately; and this I believe to be true of some of you.

18. *For, first of all, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it.*

19. For such Divisions, which are the natural effect of Mens Pride, and other sinful Dispositions God permits to take place in the Church. As for other Reasons, so for this particularly, that They, who are truly good Men, may hereby have opportunity of shewing it, and of distinguishing themselves from the Bad.

19. *For there must be also Heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you.*

20. When therefore you meet in such a disorderly manner, this is not behaving your selves like Men, who come to the Lord's Supper; For that is a Feast of Love, in which every Person in the Congregation hath an equal right to communicate.

20. *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.*

21. For your practice is, that, instead of making this one common regular Table; They who come first eat first; and they who contribute much eat much: So that Some are sent away empty, who had little or nothing to bring; and Others, who bring in plenty, eat and drink to excess.

21. *For in eating every one taketh before other his own Supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken.*

22. What

22. *What, have ye not houſes to eat, and to drink in, or deſpiſe ye the Church of God, and ſhame them that have not? Shall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not.*

22. If ſuch diſtinctions between Rich and Poor muſt be made, why are they not made at home? How is it, that you thus affront the publick Congregation, by expoſing the Poverty of thoſe Chriſtians, who are on ſuch occaſions all upon the ſame level? This is a Corruption which deſerves very ſharp Reproof.

23. *For I received of the Lord that which alſo I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which he was betrayed, took bread;*

24. *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take eat, this is my Body which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.*

25. *After the ſame manner alſo he took the Cup, when he had ſupped, ſaying, This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood, This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.*

23, 24, 25. Conſider with your ſelves, how different this Proceeding is from the Method taken by our Lord at the Inſtitution of this Sacrament. He, as I learned from Him, and acquainted you; the night he was betrayed, took Bread into his Hands, and after bleſſing it, and God for it, broke that Bread, and declared this to be a Repreſentation of his Body to be broken on the Croſs, commanding his Diſciples to eat it, as a Memorial of his Death and Sufferings for their ſakes. And accordingly he diſtributed of it, to them all. In like manner he did with the Cup after Supper, declaring the Wine contained in it to be a Memorial of his Blood ſhed for the Ratification of the New Covenant between God and Man; and commanding them, upon every occaſion of drinking it, to do it in remembrance of his Blood ſo ſhed, and this Covenant ſo ratified. And every one of them drank of it accordingly.

26. *For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew the Lord's death till he come.*

26. Thus you ſee, that the End of this Sacrament is thereby to commemorate the Death of our Bleſſed Lord, and to keep him in our Minds, during his abſence from us: In which Memorials conſequently every Chriſtian, of what degree or condition ſoever, hath an equal right to partake, becauſe every one is equally concerned in the Mercy remembred and repreſented by them.

27. *Wherefore, whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

27. They therefore, who by their irregular Practice, ſhall profane a Sacrament appointed to ſo holy a Uſe; and by unequal and uncharitable Diſtinctions ſhall contradict the deſign of an Ordinance, which expreſſes Chriſt's Love to all Mankind in general, (high and low, rich and poor alike) do treat his Body and Blood with contempt, like that of his Murtherers, who affronted and inſulted him, as if he had been not only a common Man, but one of the vileſt of Men.

28. Therefore before every Approach to this Sacrament, 'tis fit that a Man ſee into and be ſatisfied with the diſpoſition of his own Mind; that he come with due Reverence to ſo Holy an Ordinance, and with Charity to all thoſe for whom the Death commemorated in it was undergone. And then he will partake of this Sacrament worthily.

28. *But let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.*

29. But he that comes in a profane and diſorderly manner, is ſo far from receiving benefit or a pledge of God's Love in theſe conſecrated Elements; that they are to Him an increaſe of Guilt and a pledge of Puniſhment from God; who muſt needs be highly provoked at the Irreverence of thoſe Men who make no difference between the Memorials of Chriſt's Body, diſtributed in the Church, and any common Meal.

29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſcerning the Lord's body.*

30. Thus it is plain God hath expreſſed his Anger againſt you of *Corinth* already; by puniſhing this Profaneneſs and Violation of the Lord's Supper, with Diſeaſes, of which ſome among you ſtill lie languiſhing, and others are dead.

30. *For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep.*

31. For, if we would take an account of our ſelves, and be careful to celebrate this Supper of the Lord, with the reverence due to a Feaſt of Charity, and Commemoration of a Saviour dying for the Sins of the World; we ſhould prevent theſe Puniſhments from God.

31. *For if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged of the Lord.*

32. But when God thus chaſtiſes us with temporal Afflictions, (*Weakneſs*, and *Sickneſs*, &c.) he intends that theſe ſhould be Warnings to us; that ſo repenting of the Faults that have provoked him to ſend them upon us; we may eſcape the Eternal Puniſhments that await the Wicked, and Profane, and Impenitent hereafter.

32. *But when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.*

33. Therefore I exhort you, as Brethren, that at all times of celebrating this holy Feaſt, you wait for the whole Congregation; and order Matters ſo, that every one may partake of it.

33. *Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.*

34. And if any Man's Appetite be ſo keen, that upon this pretence he would haſten the Feaſt before its proper time; let him ſatisfie theſe Deſires at his own Houſe; and not draw upon the publick Congregation the Scandal and Puniſhment of ſuch indecent Practices, as this I have been reprehending. And for other Matters among you that ſtand in need of regulating, they ſhall be taken care of by me, when I ſee you.

34. *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that you come not together unto condemnation. And the reſt will I ſet in order when I come.*

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

I Have, in the Paraphraſe on this portion of Scripture, been larger than is uſual, in hopes to deliver it, if poſſible, from thoſe miſtaken Notions of unworthy Receiving the Bleſſed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which They, who would excuſe their not frequenting it, pretend to ground upon this Paſſage to the *Corinthians*. With how little Reaſon, this Expoſition makes it evident; but that I may make the Caſe plain, even to the meaneſt Capacity, I deſire theſe Two things may be farther conſidered.

1. That the Damnation, which St. *Paul* here ſpeaks of, is not Eternal Miſery, or that which we find elſewhere termed the *Damnation of Hell*. The Apoſtle ſufficiently explains his own meaning, by adding, *For this cauſe many are ſick and weakly among you*: Which reſtrains the *Damnation* ſpoken of before to Bodily Diſtempers and Temporal Puniſhments. And, that no other but Temporal could be intended, follows unavoidably from the 32d Verſe, where this is called a *Chaſtening of the Lord*, to prevent ſome worſe Condemnation. Now Eternal Damnation hath nothing of the nature of a Chaſtiſement in it; but it is entirely an Act of Vengeance. Nor is there any worſe or future Condemnation to follow, for which that can poſſibly be inflicted as a Warning or Remedy againſt. Conſequently, The Damnation, which Men commonly profeſs to be terrified from this Sacrament by the fear of, is altogether different from that mentioned here, and hath nothing to do in the Text of St. *Paul*. Ver. 30.

2. As the Puniſhment our People now ſcare themſelves with is not, So neither is the Unworthineſs they profeſs to ſuſpect themſelves of, the ſame with That of theſe *Corinthians*. For the clearing this Point, let it be

obſerved; That, in the Primitive Church, it was cuſtomary, to bring to their Religious Aſſemblies, every one as he was able and diſpoſed, Proviſions for a common Entertainment. Out of theſe Proviſions a convenient Quantity was ſet apart to be conſecrated for the Bleſſed Sacrament. This Sacrament was in ſome Churches celebrated before, in Others after that Feaſt of Love, (as this Entertainment was uſed to be called) But in all places they were both celebrated in company with each other. The Deſign of theſe Feaſts was to expreſs and maintain Friendſhip and Concord; and to ſhew, that Chriſtians eſteemed themſelves one Family, and one Body; to be a Comfort to the Poor, whoſe Neceſſities were thus relieved at the publick Expence, and to ſpeak the Charity and Condeſcenſion of the Rich, who thus declared their meaner Brethren, in all Chriſtian Priviledges, fellow Members, and equal with the Greateſt. Theſe voluntary Contributions were ſtiled Oblations, becauſe every Contributor was underſtood to devote what he brought to a Religious Uſe, wholly to diveſt himſelf of any property in it, and to make of the whole one common Fund, to which God and the Church only had from thenceforth a right. And therefore, As theſe Entertainments were a Feaſting with God, and with the whole Body of Believers: So every one, who had a right to this Table, (as All had, who for ſome notorious Offence were not ſhut out from the Communion of the Lord's Supper) had right to ſhare alike, though all did did not contribute alike; nay even, though the Circumſtances of ſome were ſo ſtrait, that they could not contribute any part at all.

Now when this Parity, an Emblem of Chriſt's univerſal Love to Mankind, was broken in upon; When every one would take upon him to eat at his own time, and in proportion to his own bringing; This was a ſeparating what had been made common, a taking back that, which had been ſolemnly, given to God and his

Church;

Church; a defeating of all the Ends and Significations of these Assemblies; a Reproach to, and Robbery of the Poor; by invading the Comforts and the Refreshments, designed for Them in a more peculiar manner: But especially it was an insufferable Scandal and Profanation, when such Feasts, as were intended to promote Religion, became the Occasions of Riot and Excess. Abuses which grew so fast, and gave so great and just Offence, as to render the total disuse of the *Agapæ* or Love-Feasts expedient; and made the Custom general, of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper singly; and of changing the Offering of Bread and Wine in kind, to That of Alms for the use of the Poor, deposited in the Hands of proper Persons, most likely to know their several Necessities, and to proportion this Relief accordingly.

It is now as clear as the Light, that in a Church like Ours; Where the consecrated Elements are furnished at the publick Expence; Where no Man brings or takes his own Supper, but all is delivered by the Minister, without any respect of Persons; Where Distribution is made equally, decently, devoutly, and as nigh to the Primitive Institution as can well be imagined: Is it not clear, I say, that the Unworthiness charged upon the *Corinthians*, neither is, nor possibly can be Ours? And, if so, it must follow, that these Texts of St. *Paul* are perverted to a very wrong use, when made the pretence of keeping from the Holy Table Men, whose present Circumstances have no manner of concern in, or relation to them.

I readily allow, that Men may be under the danger of receiving unworthily, upon several other accounts, as well as This. Every notorious and wilful Offence against, and Failure in, the Particulars, which my Last Discourse laid down, as fit Preparations for this Blessed Ordinance, does without question render them unworthy. But how does St. *Paul* proceed on this

occaſion? By thoſe Expreſſions, *Do this as oft as ye ſhall drink it, in remembrance of me*: And
Ver. 25, 26. *As oft as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do ſhew forth the Lord's death till he come*: He abundantly intimates, that this is a Duty, which ought frequently to be performed. So the firſt Chriſtians plainly underſtood it, who ſeem to have made This, as conſtant a part of their publick Worſhip, as any Other. And, after denouncing the Judgments of God againſt unworthy Communicants, he does not, for prevention of theſe, exhort them to conſult their own ſafety, by abſtaining altogether, but by *examining* and
Ver. 28. *judging themſelves*; and ſo *eating of that Bread and drinking of that Cup*. Thus did the Apoſtle, Thus does our Church argue, *If any Man ſay, I am a grievous Sinner, and therefore am afraid to come*;
Second Exhort. *Wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not aſhamed to ſay, ye will not come? When ye ſhould return to God, will ye excuſe your ſelves, and ſay, ye are not ready? Conſider earneſtly with your ſelves, how little ſuch feigned Excuſes will avail before God.* In ſhort; He, that comes not, and He that comes unworthily, are both of them in a dangerous and damnable State. The Former, becauſe he will not uſe his beſt Remedy; The Latter, becauſe he profanes and abuſes his beſt Remedy. And there is but one way for Both to be ſafe, which is, by coming as often, and as well prepared as they can; and then God will not fail to forgive, and kindly to accept them.

Did Men but conſider, (what is, moſt certainly true) that every Act of Religion, publick or private, requires the very ſame Diſpoſition of Mind, with this Sacrament; That no Man is fit (for inſtance) to ſay the Lord's Prayer, who is not fit to eat and drink at his Table; That Reading, and Hearing, and Praying unworthily, that is, without due Reverence, and in the Love and

Indulgence

Indulgence of any wilful Sin) is damnable, as well as unworthy Communicating; They would ſoon ſee cauſe to alter their meaſures with relation to this matter. They would find, that the Excuſes uſually alledged for the neglect of This, would, if purſued through their juſt Conſequences, hold every whit as ſtrongly, for caſting off every branch of ſolemn Worſhip, enjoined by the Chriſtian Religion. I ſpeak not this, with the leaſt intent to lower the Reſpect and Care due to this Holy Ordinance; God forbid; but to heighten it for Others, ſuch as Prayer, Publick and Private, Hearing God's Word, and the like: Which are too commonly done, as things of Courſe. And yet there is not One of all theſe, the due performance whereof does not require the ſame Sorrow for our paſt Sins, the ſame ſtedfaſt Purpoſes of Amendment, the ſame Faith in Chriſt, the ſame Charity to our fellow Chriſtians, and to all Men, as the communicating at the Bleſſed Table. And no Man is accepted by God in any of theſe, who is not fit to come to the Other. To ſay all in a Word; No Man, who leads a good Life, can ever be unprepared for the Lord's Supper; And no Man, who leads a bad one, can come prepared, to that, or to any Chriſtian Ordinance whatſoever.

And this, I hope, may ſerve to ſhew the Vanity of another ſort of Unpreparedneſs commonly alledged, The want, I mean, of Leiſure to retire ſo many Hours, or to ſay ſo many Prayers, before each Communion. Theſe are, no queſtion, very proper Exerciſes, when Men have opportunities for them; and no Man can take too much pains with himſelf, to afflict his Soul with Remorſe, or to raiſe his Affections and Devotion on ſuch occaſions. But, to think that, by theſe Meditations and Prayer we are, and that without them we cannot be, prepared, is rank Superſtition, and an Errour, that draws a world of ill Conſequences after it. For even thoſe Prayers, if we hold faſt any darling Luſt, are an

Abomination; an Hypocriſie, that mocks God, and deludes ones own Soul. And I wiſh all People could be made duly ſenſible, that a *Week's Preparation*, when ſuch extraordinary Addreſſes are added to a *Conſcience void of offence toward God and toward Man*, may be exceeding well; yet nothing can be depended upon, but the Communicating frequently, and reverently, and living, as if we were every day to communicate, between one Opportunity and another. To ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well; To love God, and keep his Commandments; To follow the Works of our Calling with Induſtry; And to provide for our Families with Honeſty; To truſt in God's good Providence, and be content with our Condition; To preſerve Unity in the Church, Peace and Order in the State; To ſtudy to be Quiet, to do our own Buſineſs, and the Duty of the Capacity and the Relations we ſtand in; To abhor Uncleanneſs, and Evil-ſpeaking, and all Uncharitableneſs; This is true Preparation: And He that thus communicates, though at a Minute's warning, will never be rejected of God, or deſerve to be condemned by Men. And therefore Men would do well to conſider this, and how they can anſwer, either living out of ſuch a State, or neglecting the Sacrament when they are in it.

The GOSPEL.

St. Luke xxiii.

1. *AND the whole multitude of them aroſe, and led him unto Pilate.*

2. *And they began to accuſe him, ſaying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Ceſar, ſaying, That he himſelf is Chriſt a King.*

3. *And Pilate asked him, ſaying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he anſwered him, and ſaid, Thou ſayeſt it.*

4. *Then ſaid Pilate to the chief Prieſts, and to the people, I find no fault in this man.*

5. *And*

5. *And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jury, beginning from Galilee to this place.*

6. *When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.*

7. *And assoon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time.*

8. *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad, for he was desirous to see him of a long season; because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.*

9. *Then he questioned with him in many words, but he answered him nothing.*

10. *And the chief Priests and Scribes stood, and vehemently accused him.*

11. *And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraied him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.*

12. *And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves.*

13. *And Pilate, when he had called together the chief Priests and the Rulers, and the people,*

14. *Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people, and behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him.*

15. *No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.*

16. *I will therefore chastise him, and release him.*

17. *For of necessity he must release one unto them at the Feast.*

18. *And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas,*

19. *(Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murther, was cast into prison.)*

20. *Pilate therefore willing to release Jesus, spake again to them;*

21. *But they cried, saying, Crucifie him, crucifie him.*

22. *And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him, I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.*

23. *And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief Priests, prevailed.*

24. *And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.*

25. *And he released unto them, him that for sedition and murther was cast into prison whom they had desired, but he delivered Jesus to their will.*

26. *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.*

27. *And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.*

28. *But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your children.*

29. *For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bear, and the paps which never gave suck.*

30. *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us.*

31. *For*

31. *For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry.*

32. *And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death.*

33. *And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*

34. *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. And the parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

35. *And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, he saved others, let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*

36. *And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,*

37. *And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thy self.*

38. *And a superscription also was written over him, in letters of Greek, and Latine, and Hebrew,* THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39. *And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thy self and us.*

40. *But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Doest not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?*

41. *And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*

42. *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

43. *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

44. *And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour.*

45. *And the Sun was darkned, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.*

46. *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

47. *Now when the Centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.*

48. *And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*

49. *And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*

COMMENT.

THere are Three things in this Day's Gospel, which I choose at present to treat of, as more especially calling for our serious Consideration.

I. The *First* is Our Lord's great Charity in Praying for his Enemies, Ver. 34. *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

II. The

II. The *Second* is The Caſe of the Penitent Thief, from Ver. 39 to Ver. 43 incluſively.

III. The Laſt, Our Lord's commending his Soul to his Father, Ver. 46. Of Theſe briefly in their Order.

1. I begin with our Lord's praying for his Enemies, Ver. 34. in which he hath ſet us an Example of the moſt perfect Charity, As will appear, if we obſerve,

Firſt, That the praying God to forgive them implies, that He himſelf forgave them. For the very deſign of Prayer is to beg, that God would do that, which the Perſon praying is heartily diſpoſed to do, but either cannot compaſs it at all, or not without God's ſpecial Aſſiſtance. And therefore to ask of Him that, which, if in our own power, we would not grant, is turning our Devotion into Mockery, and a piece of the vileſt and moſt impious Diſſimulation. 'Tis true, that Chriſt, as God, cou'd beſtow the Bleſſing he here intercedes for; But I have ſaid heretofore, that, in all thoſe Actions, which ſpeak Submiſſion, (and ſuch to be ſure is Prayer) he is to be conſidered, as a mere Man; And the Powers of the Divine Nature, though actually inſeparable from his Humane, yet are at ſuch times to be look'd upon, as under a voluntary Suſpenſion. And therefore neither does the humble manner of this Interceſſion prove any thing againſt his Divinity; Nor the being God as well as Man call into queſtion the Sincerity of his Requeſt; though able, in One of theſe Capacities, to give, what, in the Other, he vouchſafed to ask.

Mean while the Point I am upon is ſufficiently confirmed, by our Lord's own command in another place. Where, as Evidences of *loving our Enemies, doing good to them that hate us*, and *bleſſing them that curſe us*, is added, *Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you.* This being the Matth. v. 44.

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higheſt, as well as the moſt beneficial, Inſtance of Charity. Such as no perverſeneſs of our Enemies can obſtruct; but ſuch withal, as cannot come in regularly, till we have brought our ſelves to thoſe that went before. Becauſe They may be counterfeit and deſigning, where we tranſact with Men only; but in This, God is a Party, and Prayer appeals to Him, for the Earneſtneſs of our Wiſhes, and the Integrity of our Hearts.

2. *Secondly*, The Greatneſs of our Saviour's Charity is moſt conſpicuous, from the Time of putting up this Prayer. It was not only for Men, who had perſecuted him to the Death, prefaced that Death with all the Calumnies and Reproaches, the utmoſt Inſolence and Indignities, that unrelenting Malice could invent or execute; But it was at the very Inſtant, when he was expiring under unconceivable Torture and Anguiſh, and in the moſt infamous manner bleeding out an innocent Soul. It was for mercileſs wretches, hardned Murtherers, who were even then inſulting over his laſt Agonies, and triumphing in their own wicked Barbarity. So far above the Power of Shame, and Pain, and Wrong, and ſtill obſtinate and exaſperating Spight, was the Firmneſs and Meekneſs of his Holy Mind. And, What a a Pattern have we here to ſet before Our Eyes? The generality of whom are ſo ſoon provoked, ſo violently tranſported, ſo implacably incenſed, at Injuries or Affronts of no mighty Conſequence: So hard to forgive, even when we feel no Smart, even when the Heat is over, and the Damage imaginary only? Oh! How far ſhort is this of His Perfection? How unlike to His true Greatneſs of Soul, who is ſaid, in his Patience and Charity more eſpecially, to have *left us an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps.*

1 Pet. ii. 21.

3. A *Third* Inſtance of this Charity conſiſts in the Apology made here in behalf of his Murtherers, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* They might indeed, and ought to have known, but the Scriptures

tures bear them witneſs, that if they had *known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.* This Ignorance is all the Extenuation the Horror of their Crime was capable of. And ſome it always is, though in Proportion leſs, as the Means of Knowledge are greater. Thus our Lord does not only wiſh their Pardon, but plead and turn Advocate for the vileſt of Miſcreants. A noble Warning to all his Diſciples, that They too, when ill treated, ſhould make all poſſible Allowances, and put the moſt favourable Conſtruction upon the Wrongs they ſuffer: and let Ignorance and Infirmities, Paſſions and Surpriſes, be heard, in Mitigation of their Reſentments, and by theſe be inclined to give their own, and to beg of God His Pardon, for the worſt of Injuries and Enemies.

1 Cor. ii. 8. Acts iii. 17.

II. The Caſe of the Penitent Thief was the *Second* Thing I promiſed to ſpeak to. And here Two Things are fit to be conſidered. (1.) The Comforts it adminiſters, when rightly underſtood. And (2.) The falſe Security too commonly grounded upon it, and conſequently, the Great Danger of its being miſunderſtood.

1. As to the *Firſt*, It is remarkable, that the Other Evangeliſts ſay, *the Thieves* reviled our Lord upon the Croſs. Which, though it be an uſual and very allowable Figure of Speech, the putting a Plural Number for a Singular; yet S. *Chryſoſtom* and S. *Jerom* have choſen to reconcile thoſe, with S. *Luke*'s Account here, by underſtanding Both to have been guilty of it, but This to have retracted, and have been converted, as we ſee. Admitting Their Interpretation of the Place; The Operations of Grace upon his Mind were ſtill more wonderfully ſudden and ſtrong. But be that as it will, the Scripture furniſhes no Inſtance like it, of ſo happy a Change at a Man's laſt Moments. The *Labourers of the Eleventh Hour* are indeed a mighty Encouragement, to all People, who have had the Miſery of living long in Ignorance and Sin.

Mat. xxvii. 44. Mark xv. 32.

Yet

Yet thoſe Labourers had one Hour left, in which we are at liberty to ſuppoſe they ſignalized themſelves, and wrought with extraordinary Diligence. But here we have a poor Wretch almoſt expiring, certain Death upon him, dying under publick Puniſhment for a very heinous Crime; And thus at the end of a Life, led probably after the rate that Theirs generally are, whoſe Wickedneſs at length brings them to an untimely and ſcandalous End: And this Creature is ſoftned at once, received into Favour, and promiſed a Tranſlation from the Gibbet into Paradiſe that very Day.

This certainly is a Monument of Mercy, a ſtanding Comfort to all who truly repent, though at their laſt Hour; An Anchor of Hope to Sorrowful Sinners, and a plain Argument, that ſincere Amendment never comes too late. For even They, who have long lain in the *Snares of the Devil*, and through the Courſe of a whole Life, *been taken captive by him at his will*, ſhall, like this reclaimed Thief, be reſcued, accepted, rewarded; provided They, like Him, return to God, and improve their never ſo ſmall Remainder of Time to the beſt Advantage.

But the fatal Deluſion in this Caſe is, That few People conſider, what it is to be converted *like Him*. They look at the Event, but forget the Circumſtances that led to it. And hence grow thoſe falſe Confidences, and the great Danger of miſunderſtanding and miſapplying the account of this Matter, which I am endeavouring now to prevent, by my *Second* Particular upon this Subject.

For, when this Action comes to be throughly weighed, Some things will be found in it very extraordinary, Some that ſeldom have, Some that can never have, a Parallel. This Man, 'tis probable, had never ſeen or heard of Chriſt before; Or, if he had; 'tis yet more ſtrange, that He, who had ſtood out till then, ſhould come in to the Acknowledgment of him now. Now, when his Enemies

were

were inſulting over him, when his own Diſciples and the Companions of his Preaching and Miracles had forſaken him, when they who once *truſted it had been He, who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*, deſpaired of him; when the Companion of his Wickedneſs was at the ſame time reproaching and blaſpheming him: That He, I ſay, ſhould, in this loweſt Ebb of Miſery, and Shame, and Scorn, that ever the Son of God did or could ſtoop to, throw himſelf upon his Protection, acknowledge his Kingdom, believe him Lord of a future and better State, and the Diſpoſer of Rewards and Happineſs after Death. And all this, upon ſo ſurpriſing a Conviction, and in anſwer to the very firſt Calls of Grace. This argues ſo ingenuous a Temper, ſo noble and ſo bold a Faith, as never was out-done, as never can in all reſpects be equalled, except the ſame *Jeſus* were again to be crucified: Becauſe no Man's Converſion ever had, ever can have upon other Terms, the ſame Diſadvantages and Diſcouragements, which This Man's laboured under, and ſo generouſly overcame.

Might not then St. *Chryſoſtom*, as with great Force he does, rebuke the Impudence of thoſe late Penitents, who preſume to take Sanctuary in this Example? Who live under the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and enjoy both the Outward Calls of God's Word, and the Inward Sollicitations of his Spirit, but turn the deaf Ear continually to Both? Who profeſs to believe a riſen and a glorified Redeemer, to expect him as their Judge, and call him Lord and King, and have liſted themſelves in his Service by Baptiſm: But pay him no degree of that Reſpect, which this Stranger did, when he had rendred himſelf of no Reputation, and appeared in the Guiſe of the vileſt Malefactor? This certainly ſhews ſuch a Difference, as muſt, if reflected on, convince all wilful Delayers of Repentance, that they have no Precedent to produce for their Confidence: Indeed, that their State is as unlike to His, as that of a Converſion aſtoniſhingly

ſpeedy and gallant, is to an obſtinate Backwardneſs and Delay: And, that the only part of the Compariſon that holds, is that of Death being at the Door.

That God ſhould communicate the Aſſiſtances of his Grace very liberally, to One ſo diſpoſed to cloſe with the firſt Motions of it, as this Thief; agrees with thoſe exalted Notions of his Goodneſs, which both Reaſon and Revelation have given us. But what Aſſurance can we have from Either, of his Readineſs to aſſiſt and bring over thoſe, who have received it in vain? Why ſhould They ſuppoſe, that a Spirit ſo often driven away will be at their Call, whenever they pleaſe; and, by a more than common Influence, work in them a Change, juſt when they come to die, which they would never be prevailed upon to concur with, or conſent to, in the whole Courſe of their Lives? No, no. If theſe Men are deſirous to find a Parallel, they have it here at Hand. The Other Thief, who went out of the World railing and reviling, is much more likely to be the true Emblem of Their ſad Condition. For He is far from being the only Inſtance of a wicked Creature given up by God at his laſt Hour; But the penitent Thief is the only one we are ſure of, reclaimed at his laſt Hour. And This too ſuch a one, as cannot be drawn into Conſequence by any Chriſtian, by reaſon of thoſe Circumſtances, in which it is not ſo much as poſſible, for this Caſe to agree, with that of any, who ſhall preſume to defer his Repentance, though but till the next Hour.

Let us therefore deal fairly with our ſelves, and not read this Story by halves. Let us in it contemplate the Juſtice of a provoked, as well as the Mercy of a forgiving, God. If *to day, while it is called to day*, we do our part; we have a Title to the Conſolations of this Caſe; But if we put off from Day to Day, and continue to harden our Hearts, it contains not one Syllable of Comfort for us. And all we build upon it is without a Foundation. The Extent of our Lives we cannot, but the

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Difficulties of a Death-bed Repentance we may, certainly know. And, if once Matters come to this paſs, we cannot be ſure of the Power, nay we cannot be ſure of ſo much as the Will, to repent. But ſuppoſing this not to be denied us; We cannot have the ſame Aſſurance of being then accepted, which this Thief had. For many things at ſuch a time concur to deceive us: And even thoſe good Purpoſes then raiſed in our Minds God only can foreſee, whether they would be ſtedfaſt. We find by Experience many who have reſolved well, if God grant an unexpected Recovery, relapſe into their old Impieties: And do not only deceive Others, but Themſelves too. The only Courſe then to be ſafe and eaſy, is to repent ſo early, that the Fruits may put the Sincerity of our Change paſt any doubt: For we can never have too mean a Thought of doing this upon Beds of Languiſhing, and at the approach of Death. And the moſt that ought to be ſaid in favour of ſuch a Delay, is not to pronounce it altogether deſperate. But This is a Danger, which, I hope, the due Obſervance of this Holy Seaſon we are now in, hath delivered us from. And if ſo, then may we with great Equanimity imitate our Bleſſed Lord, in that Act, which I propoſed to treat of in the

III. *Third* and laſt Place, deſcribed in theſe Words, Ver. 46. *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* The Obſervations, which this furniſhes Matter for, are principally theſe that follow.

1. This proves the Reality of Chriſt's Humane Nature, with regard to the Soul, no leſs than the Body. For the Spirit here commended to God could not be the Divine Spirit, which ſome ancient Hereticks imagined Chriſt's Body to have been actuated by; but it muſt be the ſame Intelligent part of him, as Man, which is, in every one of Us, the Principle of Life, and Senſe, and Motion; And which by Death is diſlodged from a fleſhly Maſs, no longer in Condition to receive, and be influenced by it.

2. The Manner of our Lord's giving up this Spirit hath generally been thought to carry in it an Air of Authority; and to intimate, that, as the delivering it was an Act of free Choice, so the resuming of it was likewise fully in his own Power; And therefore the Form made use of on this Occasion is such as properly denotes the leaving Goods of Value to be kept by a trusty Friend, till called for again. It may be said indeed, that Other Good Men, who confessedly have not the same Power, are found to have committed their Souls to God in like manner. They have indeed done so, but with this Difference: That, in Christ this was a Declaration of his having purchased Immortality for humane Nature; and a sort of Claim for raising it from the Dead: In Others, it is an Expression of their Faith, that their Souls and Bodies shall again be united, by Virtue of that Resurrection, which their Saviour's Rising hath ensured to them.

3. From hence it follows, that the Humane Soul is a Substance distinct from the Body, that it lives after it, in a State separate from it, and such a State, as is susceptible of Happiness or Misery. For, why is the Spirit here the Object of our Lord's Care, and deposited in God's Hands; but because these are set to signify a Place of Safety from Danger, where Souls shall not only survive; but live too in a manner, far distant from that, in which they lived here; where no Temptation shall be able to assault, no Sin to pollute, no Affliction to discompose them? This we find to have been the Sense even of the Jewish Church before our Saviour's Time.

Wisd. iii. 1,2,3. *The Souls of the Righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no Torment touch them. In the Sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Misery. And their going from us to be utter Destruction, but they are in Peace.*

4. *Laſtly*, From hence there ſeems alſo to be ſufficient Foundation for concluding, that the Souls of Good Men enter upon a State of Bliſs, immediately after their Departure out of the Body. Eſpecially, if together with theſe Words to his Father, we take Chriſt's Promiſe made juſt before to the Penitent Thief, that *he ſhould that Day be with Him in Paradiſe*.

Theſe are Particulars, that cannot now conveniently receive an Enlargement worthy of them: and are therefore recommended to the Improvement of the Reader. Who will not find it difficult, from hence to draw ſuch Inferences, as may turn to great Account; By ſupporting him under the Trials of the preſent Life; By arming him againſt the immoderate Fears of Death; And by quickning him in ſuch Virtues and Graces, as are neceſſary, to juſtify his Hopes of exchanging this for an infinitely better State, when God ſhall ſee him ripe for it.

Good Friday.

The COLLECTS.

ALmighty God, we beſeech thee graciouſly to behold this thy Family, for which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to ſuffer death upon the Croſs, who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghoſt, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Eph. iii. 14, 15. Matth. xxvi. xxvii. Acts ii. 23. Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

ALmighty and everlaſting God, by whoſe Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and ſanctified; Receive our ſupplications and prayers, which we offer before thee for all eſtates of men in thy holy Church; that every member of the ſame, in his vocation and miniſtry, may truly and godly ſerve thee, through our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Eph. iv. 4. 1 Pet. i. 2. Rom. xii. 4--8. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 20. Eph. iv. 1.

Wisd. xi. 24.
Ezek. xviii. 23, 32.
xxxiii. 11.
John x. 11, 16.
Rom. xi. 5.
ix. 27.

O Merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made; nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live: Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd. Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

Heb. x. 1.

1. *THE Law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect:*

2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.*

3. *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.*

4. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

5. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*

6. *In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure:*

7. *Then said I, Lo, I come, (In the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.*

8. *Above when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law:*

9. *Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will (O God:) He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*

10. *By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

11. *And every Priest standeth daily ministring and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*

12. *But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.*

13. *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

14. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

15. *Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,*

16. *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them:*

17. *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

18. *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

19. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,*

20. *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh:*

21. *And having an high Priest over the house of God:*

22. *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for he is faithful that promised)*

24. *And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works:*

25. *Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*

COMMENT.

THE Epistle for this Day, being a Continuation of an Argument carried on in the Chapter foregoing, hath already fallen in great measure within the Compass of Two former Discourses upon that Subject. For this Reason it is, that I conceive a Paraphrase of the Words not very necessary, and that all I design to say at present shall be somewhat very briefly on these Two Points.

Epist. for v S. in Lent.
Epist. for Wed. before Easter.

I. *First*, That the Death of Christ was a true and proper Sacrifice for Sin; And

II. *Secondly*, That this sacrifice was offered by him upon the Cross.

I. *First*, I say, The Death of Christ was a true and proper Sacrifice for Sin. The best Light we can have concerning Matters of this Nature is derived from the Ordinances and Customs of the Jews and their Law. Now thence it is certain, that such Ceremonies were used, as plainly intimated a Translation of Punishment and Guilt, from the Person offering, to the thing offered; and an Acceptance of one Life taken away, as substituted in the place of another, which by the Law was looked upon as forfeited.

To this Purpose the Owner of the Beast, thus devoted to the Altar, by bringing, and laying his Hands upon the Head of it, did thus declare his Property first, and then the free transferring of that Property to God, by devo-

ting it to Death for the Ends and Uſes ſpecified in the Law. And, with Alluſion to this Rite it is, that we read of Chriſt *laying down his Life, giving himſelf for us*, and offering *his own Body a Sacrifice for Sin*; and many other Paſſages of like Importance.

1 Joh. iii. 16. Tit. ii. 14. Hebr. x. 9, 10.

It is alſo certain, that, in Sin-Offerings, the Party concerned did confeſs his Crime over the Sacrifice; Thus, as is expreſſed in the Law of the Scape-goat, *putting his Tranſgreſſions upon the Head of the Beaſt*. That ſuch Beaſt was afterwards look'd on as unclean; that it conveyed a Legal Impurity to thoſe who touched it; as being, in the Eye of the Law, charged with Their Sins, in whoſe behalf it was offered. This was the Reaſon, why ſuch Sacrifices were not to be eaten, as the reſt were, by the Offerers; but by the Prieſts only. Who, in this regard, were Mediators between God and his People, and, by their Conſumption of it, teſtified God's Acceptance, and the Abolition of the Sin. This again is the Cauſe, why the Bodies of the Beaſts, offered in the moſt ſolemn Occaſions of this kind, were carried out, and burned without the Camp.

Levit. xvi. 21.

Levit. x. 17.

Levit. xvi. 27.

All which are Ceremonies neceſſary to be attended to, for a right underſtanding of thoſe very ſignificant Paſſages, which ſpeak of God's *laying on Chriſt the Iniquities of us all*, of his *bearing our Sins in his own Body*, of his being *made Sin*, and *a Curſe for us*, and of his *ſuffering without the Gate of the City*, in Conformity to the Bodies *burnt without the Camp*, and of our having *a Sin-offering, of which* the Jews *have no right to eat*.

Iſai. liii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. Hebr. xiii. 11, 12.

Once more, It is aſſigned, as a Reaſon for prohibiting the Uſe of Blood in common Food, that this was *given upon the Altar to make an Atonement for their Souls*; And hence it is,

Levit. xvii. 10, 11, 12.

is, that we ſo often hear of *Redemption through Chriſt's Blood*, of *Peace made by the Blood of his Croſs*, that himſelf mentions the *New Teſtament in his Blood*, and the like. Rom. iii. 25. Coloſ. i. 20. Luke xxii. 20.

Theſe, and other Places of the ſame nature, every conſidering Man muſt acknowledge it reaſonable to interpret, in agreement with thoſe in the Old Teſtament, to which they ſo manifeſtly allude. And if ſo, it will follow, that Either the Jews themſelves had no ſuch thing, or elſe that the Death of Chriſt was a true and proper Sacrifice. More truly ſuch indeed than Any of Theirs. As it actually conveyed the Benefits, which Thoſe could not; As its Virtue was Inherent, Theirs only Relative; And as it is the Subſtance, of which Theirs were Shadows and Repreſentations. For, that Thoſe were no better, hath been largely proved before; That This was not only a true and proper, but a ſufficient Sacrifice and Satisfaction, a very few Words will ſuffice to ſhew, after what I have had occaſion to urge in this Point already.

How acceptable to God this Sacrifice was, it is the deſign of all thoſe Texts to inform us, which declare his perfect Innocence; Either in plain Terms; Such as *doing* and *knowing no Sin*; Suffering, *the juſt for the unjuſt*; Not *needing*, as other *Prieſts, to offer firſt for himſelf, and then for the People*, Or, with reference to the Rules of chooſing out the Beſt for the Service of the Altar, which call him *the Lamb of God without blemiſh and without ſpot*, the *Lamb* that *takes away the Sin*, that *was ſlain from the foundation, of the world*; and that *offered himſelf to God without ſpot through the Eternal Spirit*.

1 Pet. ii. 22. 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Heb. vii 27. 1 Pet. i. 20. Joh. i. 29. Rev. xiii. 8. Heb. ix. 14.

The ſame Truth is yet more clearly and fully contained in thoſe many Scriptures, which aſcribe to Him a compleat Deliverance from all the Inconveniencies and Miſeries, which Sin is any where charged with bringing upon Mankind. Is the Sinner in Debt to the Law, and, like Bankrupts of old, or Criminals under Condemnation, liable to be given up to the Tormenters? Chriſt, we are told, *hath cancelled the Hand-writing that was againſt us, nailing it to his Croſs.* He hath *given his Life a Ranſom for many*; He hath *redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law*; He hath *bought us with a Price*, So that *in Him we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Remiſſion of Sins.*

Coloſ. ii. 14. Matth. xx. 28. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Rom. iii. 25.

Have Sinners departed from God, alienated his Affection, and put themſelves in a State, not only of Diſtance from, but even of Enmity againſt him? The Aliens and Strangers who *were once afar off*, are ſaid to be *made nigh, by the Blood of Chriſt*; And He to have *reconciled us to his Father by the Body of his Fleſh through death.* For which reaſon we find him emphatically ſtiled our *Peace*, becauſe he hath *ſlain this Enmity by his Croſs*,

Eph. ii. 13, 15, 16.

Does Sin leave a Stain and Pollution upon the Souls of Men, ſuch as renders them odious and loathſome in the ſight of a God *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity?* *His Blood* is ſaid to *waſh us, to cleaſe us from all Sin, to purge our Conſciences from dead Works*; We are ſaid, to be (like the things purified from Legal Uncleanneſs heretofore) *ſprinkled*, and *ſanctified* by this *Blood of the Covenant*; and by that *Will of God*, which removed the many imperfect Levitical, that he might *eſtabliſh* this one perfect Evangelical Purification; Even the *Of-*

Rev. i. 5. 1 Joh. i. 7. Heb. ix. 14. x. 29.

fering

fering of the Body of Jesus Christ, as the Scripture now before us expressly asserts. x. 9, 10.

Once more; As the dire Effects of Sin are by no Images more lively represented, than by those of Wounds and putrifying Sores, of Sickness and Death; So neither are the Benefits of our Lord's Passion at any time more sensibly expressed, than by his *Stripes healing us*, by his *quickning them that are dead in Trespasses* and *Sins*, and our *living in and by Him who died for us*. And, to shew, that the Virtue of this Spiritual Restorative knows no bounds, he is said, to *justifie Men from all things, from which they could not be justified*, by any former Dispensation, and to *save even the chief of Sinners*.

1 Pet. ii. 24. Eph. ii. 1. 1 Thes. v. 14. Acts xiii. 39. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Thus much, I conceive may very well suffice for proving the Death of Christ, not only a true, but a sufficient Sacrifice and Satisfaction for Sin. It only remains now, that I shew this Sacrifice and Satisfaction to have consisted strictly in That, which makes the principal Subject of our Devotions this Day, his Dying upon the Cross for us.

Now, for a right understanding of this matter, we must again be beholding to the Guidance of those Rites and Offices, so often referred to in this Epistle; Which were peculiar to the *Jews* yearly Solemnity, on the Great Day of Atonement. But we must, in the Contemplation of those Rites, be sure to take this Caution along with us; That our Lord is to be considered in a double Capacity: As the Sacrifice offered; and as the Priest offering it. And therefore care must be had to distinguish between these two Relations, between the Acts and Effects proper to him in the One, and in the Other of these Qualities; Which were united in one and the same Person, at the time of This Oblation, but remained

mained perfectly distinct, and had different Subjects, in every other Oblation whatsoever.

Now, at that Day of Expiation only, the Sin-Offerings were commanded to be slain by the High-Priest's own Hand. And this was as significant an Emblem, as the Condition of the thing would bear, of our Great High-Priest, and Sin-Offering both, *laying down his own Life*, and voluntarily *offering up himself for us*. Of the Blood of those Sacrifices the Levitical High-Priest was to bring part into the Holy place, which, containing the Symbols of God's more special Presence and Favour, was, as you have seen before, a Figure of Heaven. Christ therefore, by ascending into Heaven, with his crucified Body, performed an Act, exactly correspondent to that of the High-Priest, when carrying the Blood of the Sin-Offering into the Holy place. And therefore he is observed to have performed this part of his Sacerdotal Office, with the difference of one or two very material Circumstances to Our Advantage; That, whereas that Figurative Sanctuary was entred with the *Blood of Others*, (of Calves and Goats) *yearly*, He entred into the True, the Heavenly Sanctuary *Once* only, and then *with his own Blood*.

The Question now arising from hence is, Whether the Atonement under the Law were actually made by the Blood of the Sacrifice, when slain in the outward Tabernacle, or, when brought and sprinkled within the Veil: And, in proportion, whether the Sins of Men, under the Gospel, be expiated by the Death of Christ's Body on the Cross, Or, by exhibiting that crucified Body, before his Father in Heaven.

For resolving this Doubt, Let it be considered; In what Capacity the High-Priest entered the Holy place; Why he entred into it but once a Year; And, Why then not without Blood.

First then it is manifest, that, on the Day of Atonement, the High-Priest went twice into the Holy place; Once,

Once, with the Blood of the Bullock, which was slain as a Sin-Offering for himself, and for his House. And, by bringing in this Blood was signified the Remission of his own Sins, and of Theirs, who assisted in the Service of the Altar: And herein he was the Representative of the Priestly Order, and qualified to proceed in offering for Others. Thus purged, he was the Figure of that Great High-Priest, whose perfect Innocence exempted him from a double Entrance, as not needing to offer for himself, in order to render him capable of being accepted for Others. A Second time he entred with the Blood of the Goat, which was slain as a Sin-Offering for the People. And thus he sustained a more publick Character; Representing the whole Congregation, who virtually, and in the Construction of the Law, entred together with him. And in this regard he resembled our *Jesus*, *by whose Blood*, (as we have heard this morning) *we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the Veil, that is to say, his Flesh.* Levit. xvi. 12, 13, 14. Ver. 15.

Secondly, The High-Priest entring but once (that is, one Day only) in the Year, was never intended to prove, that no Sacrifices for Sin offered on any other Day, when he did not enter, were not effectual for Remission. For the Contrary is manifest, from the Law it self. But the Difference is, that those other Sacrifices were Occasional and Personal; And thus far they availed, that the Parties offering them were purified from those particular Transgressions then confessed, and restored to all the Privileges of Communion with God in his Worship. But the Effect of the Sacrifices, offered on the Day of Atonement, and of Those only, was General; and extended to the Benefit of the whole Body of the People. These therefore were the most express Image of a Sacrifice to be offered for the Sins of all Mankind. And a Year being

being a perfect Revolution of Time, in which all Nature seems to have finished its Course; the allowing this Solemn Atonement to be yearly and no more, was the best Intimation, that Oeconomy was capable of giving, that this Great Sacrifice should be offered but Once, and that it should suffice to *perfect for ever* the Persons *sanctified by it.*

Thirdly, The High-Priest, even at that Solemn Day, was not allowed to enter into the Holy place without Blood. By being denied familiar and constant Access to the Presence of God, was intimated that state of Guilt, which rendereth Men unworthy to approach him. By being allowed it after the slaying of the Sin-Offering, is signified the removal of that Guilt and Unworthiness, by God's acceptance of the Sacrifice. So that this Access supposes an Expiation: And the bringing in of the Blood is not the Making such Expiation, but the Evidence of one already made. This is the Type: And the Antitype exactly answers it. Humane Nature, while polluted by Sin, was incapable of entring Heaven; Our Lord, by suffering in this Nature, hath procured to it Immortality, and Admittance thither. He entred there, as Our Common Representative; And, by that Entrance, testifies the Expiation finished: For so it must be, or ever our Nature could gain access thither. The Ascent then to, and Residence of our Nature in, Heaven, is an Argument, that God is fully reconciled. The crucified Body of our Lord dwelling for ever with God is a continual exhibiting of the Merits and Efficacy of his Sacrifice; But the Act of entring is not properly a Sacrifical Act in Christ; Or of an expiatory Nature: Farther than it declares the Sacrifice, and the Power of it. It is indeed an Act of Triumph after, and Reward for, having offered himself up in this Quality. The Death of our Lord on the Cross answers to the Death of the Sin-Offering at the Altar. The Remission is obtained by means of, and consequently to be dated from

the

the time of, ſhedding the Blood. Hence is our Saviour ſaid to *riſe again for our juſtification.* And how could that be ſaid of him, if we were not juſtified, till ſome time after he roſe, and no Pardon obtained, till his Aſcent into Heaven? Hence the *Blood of the Croſs* is ſaid to have *made our peace*; and that in the Croſs, (or his Body upon it, as ſome underſtand that Paſſage) he defeated and *triumphed over* the Enemies of our Souls. Hence again, we read, that *after he had by himſelf purged our ſins, he ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high.* And, in the very Scripture I am upon, that, *after he had offered one Sacrifice for ſins* for ever, *he ſat down on the right hand of God.* And *Laſtly*, Hence we may reaſonably preſume, he expired upon the Croſs, with thoſe ſignificant Words in his Mouth, *It is finiſhed:* Of which more, in the following Service for this Day.

Rom. iv. 25.

Coloſ. ii. 15.

Hebr. i. 8.

In the mean while I only add, that What hath been here advanced commits no Violence at all upon thoſe Texts, where Chriſt's Eternal Prieſthood is aſſerted. For Sacrificing, though a part, was never the whole, of the Prieſtly Character. Bleſſing and Interceſſion are as eſſential Branches of it, as the Other. And theſe our Lord continues to diſcharge, with ſuch fulneſs of Power, as not to be an humble Supplicant for, but the *Author and Giver of Salvation*; the Beſtower, and not only the Asker of Bleſſings, to them for whom he vouchſafes to intercede: And an Eternal Prieſt he thus far is, with regard to the Sacrificing part too, as he hath, by that One Offering for Sin, put an utter end to, and rendred all repetition of ſuch, not only needleſs, but unſafe and ſinful.

Upon the whole matter it is very obvious, what mighty Conſolations, we may, we ought to take, even in the ſad Solemnity of this Day. What Tears of Joy are fit to be mingled with thoſe of Grief and Penitence.

The

The Latter we ſhould be ſtupid and inhumane not to pay, to the diſmal Agonies of our Deareſt Maſter; The Former; we ſhould be unthankful, and cruel to our Selves, not to give to the happy Effects of the Miſery he ſo graciouſly condeſcended to undergo for us. But, to make Both effectual, Let us, enflamed with Zeal, and Gratitude, and Love unfeigned, endeavour for our own Particular, and moſt devoutly beg for the Reſt, (as the Beſt of Churches teaches us) that the innumerable Benefits of this precious Blood-ſhedding may have their full extent, and free courſe: That *We, and the whole Church of Chriſt, may receive remiſſion of Sins*, and all the other bleſſed Effects of his Paſſion. And, that He, *who hath made a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World*, would cauſe his Way to be known, and ſhew his Saving Health to the yet dark and unbelieving Nations: And That all who do already know, may walk worthy of it. And Oh that the Death this Day taſted for every Man, may be effectual to the ſaving of every Man! Even ſo, Bleſſed Jeſus, *By thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, By thy Croſs and Paſſion, Good Lord deliver us.*

The GOSPEL.

S. John xix. 1.

1. *THEN Pilate therefore took Jeſus, and ſcourged him.*
2. *And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,*
3. *And ſaid, Hail King of the Jews: and they ſmote him with their hands.*
4. *Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*
5. *Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe: and Pilate ſaith unto them, Behold the man.*
6. *When the chief Prieſts therefore, and officers ſaw him, they cried out, ſaying, Crucifie him, crucifie him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him and crucifie him: for I find no fault in him.*
7. *The Jews anſwered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.*
8. *When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he was the more afraid,*
9. *And*

9. *And went again into the judgment hall, and ſaith unto Jeſus, Whence art thou? But Jeſus gave him no anſwer.*

10. *Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Speakeſt thou not unto me? knoweſt thou not, that I have power to crucifie thee, and have power to releaſe thee?*

11. *Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater ſin.*

12. *And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him: but the Jews cryed out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſar's friend: whoſoever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Ceſar.*

13. *When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he brought Jeſus forth, and ſat down in the judgment-ſeat, in a place that is called the pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

14. *And it was the preparation of the Paſſover, and about the ſixth hour: and he ſaith unto the Jews, Behold your King.*

15. *But they cryed out, Away with him, away with him, crucifie him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Shall I crucifie your King? The chief Prieſts anſwered, We have no King but Ceſar.*

16. *Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified: and they took Jeſus, and led him away.*

17. *And he bearing his croſs, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha:*

18. *Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either ſide one, and Jeſus in the midſt.*

19. *And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the croſs. And the writing was,* JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20. *This Title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jeſus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.*

21. *Then ſaid the chief Prieſts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews: but that he ſaid, I am King of the Jews.*

22. *Pilate anſwered, What I have written, I have written.*

23. *Then the ſoldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus, took his garments, (and made four parts, to every ſoldier a part) and alſo his coat: Now the coat was without ſeam, woven from the top throughout.*

24. *They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rent it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the ſoldiers did.*

25. *Now there ſtood by the Croſs of Jeſus, his mother, and his mothers ſiſter, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*

26. *When Jeſus therefore ſaw his mother, and the diſciple ſtanding by, whom he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy ſon.*

27. *Then ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that diſciple took her unto his own home.*

28. *After this, Jeſus knowing that all things were now accompliſhed, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt.*

29. *Now there was ſet a veſſel full of vinegar: and they filled a ſponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyſſop, and put it to his mouth.*

30. *When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is finiſhed: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.*

31. *The Jews therefore, becauſe it was the preparation, that the bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs on the ſabbath-day (for that ſabbath-day was an high day) beſought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

32. *Then*

32. *Then came the ſoldiers, and brake the legs of the firſt, and of the other which was crucified with him.*

33. *But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.*

34. *But one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith came there out blood and water.*

35. *And he that ſaw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he ſaith true, that ye might believe.*

36. *For theſe things were done, that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, A bone of him ſhall not be broken.*

37. *And again another ſcripture ſaith, They ſhall look on him whom they pierced.*

COMMENT.

THE Service of the Church, and the Scriptures already handled, have brought Us down to the laſt Act of our Bleſſed Saviour's Sufferings, and the particular Manner of his expiring upon the Croſs. Theſe therefore ſhall make the Subject of our preſent Meditation, according to the deſcription given in the Chapter now before us, (Ver. 28, 29, 30.) *viz.* That, *Jeſus*, feeling himſelf afflicted with a vehement Drought, uſual upon the approach of Death, but eſpecially in that kind of Death, where extremity of Pain and loſs of Blood exhauſt the Spirits in a more than ordinary degree, complained of Thirſt. For the quenching whereof, when his inſulting Enemies offered him Vinegar to drink, he meekly ſubmitted to their cruel Mockery; And, having moiſtned his holy Mouth with it, ſaid, *It is finiſhed*; After which he preſently *bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghoſt.*

There are Two things eſpecially obſervable from hence, which require our very attentive Conſideration.

Firſt, The true Importance of that Saying, *It is finiſhed*; And,

Secondly, The particular Manner of our Lord's Dying. Theſe I ſhall firſt explain, and then deduce from them ſome proper Reflections.

I begin

I begin with the *Former*, The true Importance of that Saying, *It is finiſhed.*

1. The *Firſt* and moſt Obvious Interpretation ſeems to regard the Prophecies concerning Chriſt. Which were ſo full and expreſs, that there was not any one Material Circumſtance, in this great concluding Scene of his Life eſpecially, which had not been moſt exactly foretold, many Ages before. This ſhewed, that all theſe things, however caſual they might appear when they happened, were yet conducted all along, by a wiſe and ſteady Providence, which ſo overruled the Wills, the Malice, and the Wickedneſs of Men, as to bring about what God had determined, and what none but He, could have ſignified ſhould be, ſo long before they came to paſs. This was a Method, very agreeable to the deſign of Almighty God, whoſe Revelations and Dealings all tended to the Myſtery of Man's Redemption: That Great and Glorious Work; in which his Divine Perfections ſhould be moſt eminently conſpicuous; Which was of greateſt conſequence to the World; And Which he therefore kept conſtantly in View, and made all other Diſpenſations ſubvervient to it.

This is the very Reaſon, why the Apoſtles, in all their Arguings with the *Jews*, inſiſt ſo much upon the Topick of Propheſies. Becauſe, according to the *Jews* own Principles, that Perſon was to be lookt upon as the true *Meſſiah*, in whom theſe Predictions were manifeſtly and punctually accompliſhed. Hence St. *John*, Ver. 28. takes notice, that *Jeſus* therefore ſaid, *I thirſt, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* The Other Propheſies relating to this matter, Such as, *being betrayed by his Friend and Companion, forſaken by his Kindred and Acquaintance, having his Hands and his Feet pierced, his Garments parted, and lots caſt upon his Veſture*; had all been made good already. But there remained One more ſtill, One acknowledged to belong to this Matter. For *David*, complaining of the Barbarity of

his Enemies, ſays, they were ſo far from extending their Relief, or ſhewing any Compaſſion, to what he endured, that, on the contrary, they exaſperated, and triumphed in his Sufferings. This pitileſs Cruelty he expreſſes, by *Giving him Gall to eat, and when he was thirſty, giving him Vinegar to drink.*

Pſal. lxix. 21.

Now *David* was confeſſed to be a Type of *Chriſt*, and what He uttered upon theſe Melancholy Occaſions, had a higher and farther meaning, than his own Perſonal Afflictions. And therefore it was neceſſary for the Evangeliſt to ſhew, that this alſo was really and literally true of Chriſt; and conſequently thoſe Words had not yet received their utmoſt Completion. So that, when our Lord, upon receiving the Vinegar, ſaid, *It is finiſhed*, we may reaſonably underſtand him thus: That all the other Predictions of things antecedent to his Death had met with Events anſwerable to them before; There was but One more unfiniſhed, And ſince This too had been punctually made good, by the Vinegar brought him to quench his Thirſt with, in that laſt Extremity; No Circumſtance of his Sufferings was now omitted, whereby the Prophets had diſtinguiſhed and pointed him out to the *Jews*. Thus far all was managed in moſt exact order; And therefore the Next thing he had to do was to die, Which accordingly he did forthwith, for *hereupon he bowed his head, and gave up the Ghoſt.*

2. *Secondly*, This Saying of our Bleſſed Lord is of great Propriety and Significance, if applied, as it may very reaſonably be, to the Types and Figures of the Jewiſh Law. For the Law was a Diſpenſation, in the very nature and deſign of it, imperfect, and preparatory to a more excellent One afterwards. This Argument (as we have had frequent occaſions to obſerve) is admirably made out in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, Where the Apoſtle inſiſts upon it, that even the moſt eminent

Places

Places and Perſons, the moſt remarkable Bleſſings and Puniſhments, in the Civil Capacity of the *Jews*, had a ſecret Myſtery, a diſtant Proſpect and Meaning. But, that the Ceremonial part of their Worſhip was entirely made up of Shadow and Image; And, that *Jeſus* Chriſt and his Goſpel, what he did, and taught, and ſuffered, was the real End and Subſtance, the entire and intended Accompliſhment, which Almighty God had in view, when he inſtituted thoſe carnal Ordinances, and darker Significations of his Will, and truly acceptable Worſhip. This was moſt eminently the Caſe in that Branch of their Service, by which they made the neareſt Approaches to Almighty God, and from whence they derived the greateſt Confidence in his Favour. Their Sacrifices I mean, and thoſe of them eſpecially, which were appointed and accepted by way of Expiation for Sin. And yet you have ſeen, that the Apoſtle makes it exceeding clear, even upon their own Principles, that none of thoſe Sacrifices could be a juſt ground of Confidence to Sinners; that it was not poſſible, they ſhould have any Efficacy of their own, to the Purpoſes they uſed them for. The power of taking away Sin is a Privilege, which not only the Nature of the thing rendred them incapable of, but the frequent and daily Repetition of the ſame Sacrifices gave plain intimation of their being defective in. And therefore This was peculiar to another Sacrifice, which was, and needed to be, offered but once only, becauſe this High-Prieſt, *who takes away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, hath by that *One Offering for ever perfected them that are ſanctified.* This is part of the Apoſtle's Argument to the *Hebrews* in his Ninth and Tenth Chapters. But withal, Since Chriſt did not effect that great Work till the *end of the World*, that is, till God made the laſt Declaration of himſelf to Mankind, and ſettled an Inſtitution, in the place where-

Epiſ. v. Sun. in Lent, Wedneſday, this Week, and this day.

of no Other was to ſucceed; It was not expedient, that the Other antecedent and more imperfect Diſpenſations ſhould keep Men void of all Comfort and Hope. Theſe ſhewed Men their Diſeaſe and their Miſery; and, if they could not apply, yet it was fit they ſhoul point out at leaſt, and give them ſome proſpect of, their Remedy. Almighty God therefore in his Wiſdom and Compaſſion, ſeems to have inſtituted Sacrifices, to ſhew, that he was not Implacable, that he would admit of a Ranſom and Proxy, and one day accept Innocent Blood, as an Atonement for the Guilt of thoſe that had offended him. Thus *the Lamb of God was ſlain from the foundation of the World*, not only in the Intention and Decree of his Father, but virtually in every one of thoſe Lambs, appointed and accepted for the Sins of Them, who lived, before this only expiatory Sacrifice was actually offered upon the Altar of the Croſs. But when That had been done, and the Wrath of God was effectually appeaſed, there was an End of all Bloody Sacrifices. The Subſtance was come, and the Shadows were done away; there was no farther uſe of Theſe, and, as uſeleſs for the future, they ceaſed of themſelves. And therefore, in this Senſe too, our Saviour might moſt truly ſay *It is finiſhed*, becauſe the Legal Expiations had now attained their full Completion, in the Death he juſt then was about to undergo; And in the Soul, which he voluntarily poured out, an innocent, unblemiſhed, a perfect, and ſufficient Oblation and Satiſfaction for the Tranſgreſſions of the whole World. Which leads us likewiſe to conſider theſe Words in a

3. *Third* moſt comfortable Senſe; As they import, That the great Work of Man's Redemption, and all that was neceſſary for reconciling Sinners to their incenſed God, had been exactly and punctually performed, by Chriſt ſuffering in the ſtead and for the ſake of Sinners. By which We are not however to underſtand, that Chriſt endured

endured the very ſame Puniſhments in kind and meaſure, which by the juſt Decree of God were due to wilful and impenitent Offenders. For Theſe could be inflicted upon ſuch only, as had offended in their own Perſons. St. *Peter* urges the Neceſſity of our Lord's Reſurrection, from the Impoſſibility of his being holden of the Pains of Death. And, if his Innocence delivered him from the Power of Temporal, much more did it exempt him from that of Eternal Death. The Torments of the Damned are without End, without Hope; And everlaſting Miſery and Deſpair could never be conſiſtent, either with the Condition of one who had never deſerved them, or with the Aſſurance of his releaſing his Brethren from them. Theſe are the conſequences of Diſobedience and Rebellion againſt God. But the Sufferings of *Jeſus* were moſt pleaſing to God, An unexampled proof of his entire Obedience in the higheſt and moſt difficult inſtance of Submiſſion; An Act of Duty and unſpeakable Charity, and ſo far from incurring his irreconcilable Diſpleaſure, that for this very Cauſe *God hath highly exalted him.* This purchaſed a Reward for his humane Nature, and Peace for thoſe, who, but for his ſake, could not be pardoned and reconciled. 'Tis true, God *bruiſed him ſorely in the day of his fierce Anger*; but he never loved him at any time more tenderly, than when he was pleaſed thus to wound him. He ſmote him, not for any Miſdemeanors of his own, in his Private; but for Ours, which in his Publick Capacity, as the Common Repreſentative of ſinful Mankind, he had taken upon himſelf; It was Our Burthen which he carried, Our Iniquities for which he was chaſtiſed, And the Stripes laid upon him made ſuch deep Impreſſion, that, by the Anguiſh of his Wounds We might be healed. Now, in order to this, there was no need, that the very ſame Pains in every point ſhould be inflicted upon Him, which, had not he ſubmitted to ſuffer for Us, we muſt our Selves have ſuffered; But

Phil. ii. 10.

it was only neceſſary, that the Injuries and Affronts, offered to the Divine Juſtice by the Provocations of wicked Men, ſhould receive a ſufficient Compenſation; that the Honour of God and his Laws ſhould be vindicated, and Sin made as terrible, and full of diſcouragement, as it could poſſibly have been, though no ſuch Methods of Mercy had been uſed, to deliver us from the Curſe and Condemnation of it. Now all theſe Ends were fully ſatisfied, by the Son of God condeſcending to ſuffer in our ſtead. Whatever was wanting in the Duration, or the Extremity, of thoſe Sufferings, was abundantly made up by the Dignity of the Perſon. This rendred him capable of purging our Conſciences by his Sacrifice, becauſe he offered himſelf to God through *the eternal Spirit*, that is, the Divine, united to our Humane, Nature.

That Union exalted the value of this Oblation to an infinite degree, and paid a Ranſom to offended Juſtice, of more worth than a hundred thouſand Worlds. That gave Men a clear proof, how hateful Sin is to God, who would not be prevailed with to remit it upon eaſier terms, than the Agonies and Death of his only Son; and ſhewed how dreadful conſequences They are to expect from their own Faults, when even this moſt Holy, this entirely Beloved, this Divine Perſon, who did not, could not know any Sin, hath undergone ſuch bitter things for the Sins of Others. And Laſtly, This leaves the Laws of God in their full Force and Obligation ſtill; Since the matter is ſo ordered, that none but the Penitent and the Virtuous ſhall ever reap any Benefit by this Paſſion: So that, though All have now leave to hope, and great Encouragement to obey; yet None have the leaſt ſhadow of pretence for Preſumption and neglect of their Duty. For the End of thoſe who continue in Wickedneſs, is in no degree better, nay, in ſome reſpects, it is infinitely worſe, than if Chriſt had never died at all. *Thus have Mercy and Truth met together,*

and

and Righteouſneſs and Peace have kiſſed each other, in the wonderful contrivance of Man's Redemption. And This Signification of theſe Words, pronounced by our Saviour here, correſponds exactly with thoſe at the 17th Chap. Ver. 4, 5. *I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finiſhed the Work which thou gaveſt me to do. And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own ſelf.* For ſo likewiſe here, when he had run through all the bitter Stages of his Paſſion, endured every Pain, ſuſtained every Conflict that was neceſſary, and acquitted himſelf as became him in them all, having now no longer buſineſs for Life, he immediately reſigned it. Which brings me to the

II. *Second* Thing obſervable in the Text, The particular manner of our Saviour's expiring upon the Croſs, as it is expreſſed in the laſt Clauſe of the Verſe, *And he bowed his Head and gave up the Ghoſt.* The original Phraſe may denote a delivering up, or as himſelf expreſſed it, a committing his Spirit into the Hands of God, as a ſacred Truſt, to be reſtored again and united to his Body, at the time prefixed by his own Infinite Wiſdom; and plainly implies ſuch a Diſſolution, and actual Separation of Soul and Body, as every common Man undergoes when he dies. Only with this Difference, that what is in Other Men the Effect of Neceſſity, was in Him a voluntary Act, and the Effect of his own free Choice. And hence the generality of Interpreters have thought, that St. *John* takes notice, that Chriſt *bowed his Head before he gave up the Ghoſt*; whereas in common Caſes, the falling of the Head follows after the Breath's going out of the Body. Hence alſo St. *Mark* obſerves, that *Jeſus* crying out with ſo loud and ſtrong a Voice immediately before his expiring, was one Reaſon, that moved the Centurion to think him an extraordinary Perſon. For this ſhewed, that Nature was not quite ſpent in him, and that his Death did not come on by ſuch gradual and unavoidable

Luke xxiii. 46.

Decays, as it uſually does, when the Voice is ſtopped and loſt, and all the Powers faulter and languiſh, ſome time before the Soul's Departure from its fleſhly Tabernacle. Accordingly we find, that when the Soldiers came to take down the Bodies from the Croſs, they found him dead before thoſe two others, that were crucified with him; And that, when *Joſeph* came to beg the Body of *Jeſus*, *Pilate* wondred to hear that he was dead ſo ſoon; and would not grant that Requeſt, till he had firſt ſatisfied himſelf of the Truth of it, by enquiring of the Officer, who attended the Execution. Of all which the moſt probable Account is, Not that the Exceſs of his Pain and Sorrow had tired out Nature, and haſtened his Death; But that He, who, as himſelf profeſſes, had *Power to lay doww his Life*, and could not have it taken from him without his own Permiſſion and Conſent; did lay it down at ſuch a time, as himſelf ſaw convenient. Every ſtep in this laſt Act of his Life was taken regularly and with Deliberation; he bore a conſtant regard to all the Myſterious Purpoſes of this important Death; He would not die till they were all fulfilled; And, when they were ſo, he would not, becauſe there was no Occaſion that required he ſhould, live any longer. Never was there, never can there be, ſuch a Death in any Inſtance; ſo perfectly free, ſo entirely at the Perſon's own Diſpoſal. For He, who ſtruck his Enemies down to the Ground with his Majeſtick Preſence, and afterwards gave them leave to apprehend him; could likewiſe, if he had ſo pleaſed, have come down from the Croſs. He could have continued inſenſible to all the Pains of it, he could have ſurvived the ſharpeſt Anguiſh; And, had he not ſuſpended his Divine Power, Death it ſelf could not have taken hold of him, nor have bound this ſtrong Man, this infinitely more than Man, in thoſe Chains, which he therefore ſubmitted to, that he might break and burſt them aſunder ſhortly after, in a more glorious and triumphant Manner. Such was the Deceaſe of our Bleſ-

ſed Redeemer, ſo voluntary and entirely his own; So wiſe and wonderful in every Circumſtance; So victorious, even in that part of it, which his Enemies thought him vanquiſhed by. So full of Matter, ſo full of Comfort, is that dying Word of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, treated of under my Firſt Head. So juſtly might he then, ſo joyfully may every Chriſtian now, cry out, *It is finiſhed.*

The Remainder of my Diſcourſe ſhall now be employed, in ſome few Reflections, ariſing from theſe Conſiderations; ſuch as we do by no means remember this Death like Chriſtians indeed, if we do not feel our ſelves very ſenſibly affected with.

Here then we may perceive, how it came to paſs, that this Death was an Act ſo noble, and generous in it ſelf, and ſo exceeding beneficial to us. For, therefore is it a Meritorious, becauſe not only an Invaluable, but a Willing Sacrifice. Therefore was this Act of Obedience ſo well pleaſing to His Father, becauſe, even in the moſt difficult and painful inſtances, it proceeded not from Conſtraint, but from full Conſent and free Choice, Upon This account his Love to wretched Man is ſo unſpeakably tender and great, becauſe it was in his power to have refuſed the giving Us ſuch coſtly Proofs of his Kindneſs. But, though Theſe are Subjects, upon which I might very ſeaſonably and pathetically enlarge, Yet, having been upon them lately, That, which I rather chooſe to ſay at preſent, is; That, by ſuch a choſen and cheerful ſubmiſſion to die for Our ſakes, our Lord hath ſet us a Pattern, how we ought to behave our ſelves to Him, in return for ſuch marvellous Compaſſion and Love; That We ſhould think nothing too much to do, nothing too grievous to ſuffer, for a Saviour, who, of his own accord and mere Grace, hath done and ſuffered ſo much for Us. To All Perſons, who retain any ſpark of Ingenuity, and have not ſinned away all the Principles of Natural Religion, Nothing

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can be more clear and ſelf-evident, than that they are bound to ſhew themſelves ſenſible of, and make what requital they can for, Kindneſſes received. This is the Ground of that Significant Expreſſion, uſed by St. *Paul*, *The Love of Chriſt conſtraineth us to Obedience.* And Our Bleſſed Saviour takes notice, that neither the Darkneſs of the Heathens, nor the Vitious Lives of the Publicans, had extinguiſhed that Principle *of loving thoſe that loved them.* And ſhall Chriſtians be wanting in ſo plain a Duty? Chriſtians, who have the brighteſt Light to walk by, and are under the influence of the moſt powerful, moſt engaging Example? For, What Religion ever carried the points of Love and Gratitude to ſo noble a Height? What ever preſented Mankind with a Pattern, that can pretend to bear any manner of Proportion, to the great, the unſpeakable things, Our Maſter and Benefactor hath done for Us? If we obſerve the Kindneſs it Self, the Perſon who did it, and the Perſons for whom it was done, every Circumſtance is full of Wonder and Amazement. That God, who is by Nature incapable of Sufferings and Death, ſhould condeſcend to become mortal Man, to qualifie himſelf for enduring the bittereſt Afflictions; That he ſhould do this for Enemies and Rebels, for ſuch are wretched Sinners; That the Miſeries of thoſe, who had moſt obſtinately provoked and injured him, and merited his utmoſt Indignation and Wrath, ſhould move his Compaſſion to ſave their Souls at the expence of his own Life; That, in the midſt of Sorrows and Agonies, of Pains and Torture, he ſhould ſtill perſevere in this moſt gracious Purpoſe, and not accept a Deliverance, till he had finiſhed this laborious Undertaking; That He ſhould embrace Poverty and Hardſhip, Reproach and Ignominy, Bodily Anguiſh and Death, with a ready and chearful Mind, when all the Power of Hell could not have compelled him to one ſingle Pang; This is ſuch an Inſtance of Piety and Friendſhip, as no Tenderneſs ever did, or can

compare

compare with. And therefore We are of all Creatures certainly the moſt inſenſible, the moſt inexcuſable, if we do not take care to apply this Example very warmly to our Conſciences; If we read this Hiſtory of our Dearest Redeemer's Paſſion, without very moving Impreſſions, If we do not urge every Branch of it home, and render it as effectual, as it is deſigned and qualified to be, for the exciting in us the moſt irreconcilable Hatred againſt Sin, and kindling in us the moſt vigorous and ardent Affection for our dying Saviour. I ſay again, ſuch a Hatred of Sin, and ſuch Love of God and Chriſt, as this Account is well qualified to excite in us. For, What Branch of our Duty is there, which the Sufferings of our *Jeſus*, when carefully conſidered, do not furniſh the ſtrongeſt Motives, and moſt unanſwerable Argumenrs for? He commands us to repent of, that is, to be ſorry for, our paſt Faults, and to forſake them for the time to come. And can we read the doleful Story of this Day, Can we reflect, that they were Our Iniquities, for which he was bruiſed, Our Tranſgreſſions, for which he was wounded, in the Day of God's fierce Anger, without a deep and hearty Remorſe? Can we think, that we contributed to his Agonies and Griefs, that the malicious *Jews* and barbarous Soldiers were only the Inſtruments of Cruelty, but every ſinful Man in part the Cauſe of all he ſuffered; and think it, without aking Hearts, and overflowing Eyes, without Confuſion of Face, and a multitude of ſelf-condemning Reproaches? Can we behold our dear Lord's Temples pierced with Thorns, his Holy Face beſmeared with Blood, his Body torn with Scourges, nailed to the Croſs, hanging there in Convulſions, thirſting, fainting, bleeding, dying, in Pity to Us; and can we ſuffer our ſelves to be familiar with, and fond of, thoſe very Luſts, which injured, diſgraced, tormented, and ſlew our beſt Friend, and moſt generous Benefactor? Surely, if Men have any Gratitude, if any Bowels, this Proſpect, lively repreſented to their Minds,

muſt needs check their wildeſt Career, and damp the hotteſt Flames of vitious Inclinations. Surely this Thought would be Preſervative ſufficient againſt thoſe evil Practices, which, we are told, do even now grieve this Saviour; And Men muſt be aſhamed to do deſpight to ſuch a Friend, and crucify the Son of God afreſh, by enſlaving themſelves to their corrupt Affections, from whoſe Tyranny he died to deliver them. He hath told us, that the Proof he expects of our loving him, is to *keep his Commandments*, And Theſe are ſuch Commandments, as it would be our Duty and Intereſt to keep, though he had never ſuffered for us. And, ſhall We ſhew leſs Cheerfulneſs, in ſeeking our own Happineſs, than He did in taking upon Him our Miſery and Puniſhment? Did He moſt willingly die for Us, and ſhall not We be content to live to Him? To Him did I ſay? Nay to our ſelves: Since it is not his own, but Our Advantage that he ſeeks, in ordering Us to be Holy and Good Men? It may be, We ſhall find our Duty incumbred with ſome Difficulties; but What are our ſharpeſt Tryals, in compariſon of His? Or how can any Submiſſion deſerve to be named, with that moſt condeſcending Reſignation, whereby Chriſt offered himſelf freely to that Sorrow, and Shame, and Pain, which he had no Obligation to endure? He would not decline Death, in its moſt deformed and frightful Shape; He would not ſpare himſelf one Agony, that might conduce to the perfecting Our Salvation. He expoſed his Innocence to the Puniſhments he never deſerved; And ſhall We grudge the Obedience, which the Condition of Servants and Creatures lays upon Us? Shall We reſiſt the Will of God concerning Us, and murmur at the due Reward, nay much leſs than the due Reward, of our evil Deeds? He does indeed require, that we forſake all and follow him, that we lay down our Lives for his ſake: But it is very ſeldom, that he calls Men to this laſt Experiment of their Sincerity and Conſtancy. And yet if it were frequent,

quent, if it were ſure to be the Caſe of every common Chriſtian, Is not even this a reaſonable Caſe? Is it not a very poor return, to what He hath done before Us, and for Us? We cannot ſay with Him, We have Power to lay down our Lives, for theſe Lives are not our own: They are God's Gift, and always in his Diſpoſal. But He had a Right to diſpoſe of His; He could not have been Mortal had he not choſen to be ſo; His Happineſs was perfect before, and received no Addition by all the Miſeries he endured for loſt Man; And, when He choſe a Death for our Advantage, which he was not liable to Originally, ſhall not We ſubmit to that manner of Dying, which God ſees fitteſt, when die in ſome manner we unavoidably muſt? Shall we not be ſatisfied to exchange a Worſe Life for a Better, when otherwiſe, bad as it is, we muſt part with it for a Worſe? So highly reaſonable are even the hardeſt Conditions of a Chriſtian's Obedience. So prevalent would a ſerious Conſideration of our Lord's Love and Sufferings prove, to reconcile us to thoſe Difficulties, which Fleſh and Blood are moſt apt to ſtart and give back at. And therefore, The proper Uſe of This Week's Devotions is to inflame our Affections, to quicken our Endeavours, to arm us with Patience, to encourage our Perſeverance to the End: To put us in mind, that We, like Him, can only then lay down our Heads with Comfort, when we can ſay, *It is finiſhed:* When we meaſure our Life, not by the Length and Number of our Days, but by the Buſineſs and Deſign of it. No Death can be haſty or unſeaſonable, which comes, when a Man hath ſatisfied the Ends he lived for. No Life is long, which determines, before the Purpoſes of Living are made good and its Work done. But Happy, Happy They, who, after the moſt diſtreſſed, the moſt laborious, the moſt deſpiſed Inſtances of their Virtue, can ſing this Song of Triumph to themſelves, that they have been faithful in their Charge; and done what it was their Duty to do. If ſuch partake in the

Afflictions, and Reproaches, and Death of their Saviour; they ſhall aſſuredly be recompenced with partaking in his Reſurrection. And, when they give up the Ghoſt, ſhall immediately enter into the Joys of this their crucified Lord.

Eaſter Even.

The COLLECT.

Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5, 11, 12. Gal. ii. 20. vi. 14. Coloſ. ii. 11, 12.

GRant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the Death of thy bleſſed Son our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, ſo by continual mortifying our corrupt Affections, we may be buried with him; and that, through the grave and gate of death, we may paſs to our joyful Reſurrection, for his merits, who died, and was buried, and roſe again for us, thy Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The EPISTLE.

1 Pet. iii. 17.

17. *IT is better, if the will of God be ſo, that ye ſuffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.*

18. *For Chriſt alſo hath once ſuffered, the juſt for the unjuſt, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the fleſh, but quickned by the ſpirit.*

PARAPHRASE.

18. Of which Suffering Chriſt hath left us a Pattern, who died for the eſtabliſhing an Acceſs to, and Friendſhip with God, for ſinful Men; and, being perfectly Innocent, took the Puniſhment of our Sins upon him: But that Body of his which thus died, was raiſed again by that Divine Spirit.

19. *By which alſo he went and preached unto the Spirits in priſon.*

20. *Which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight Souls were ſaved by water.*

20. Which was always urging wicked Men to Repentance, and by the impulſe whereof Noah preached Repentance to the old World, and by building the Ark warned them of the Judgment of God in the approaching Deluge.

21. *The like figure whereunto even Baptiſm doth alſo now ſave us, (not the putting away the filth of the fleſh, but the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God) by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt.*

21. And his Family ſaved by the Ark ſwimming on the Water, was a Type of the Church of Chriſt, ſa-

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ved by the Sacrament of Baptiſm. But, as there, it was not the Water or the Ark, but the Righteouſneſs and Obedience of *Noah* that preſerved him; So neither here is it the Water which cleanſes the Fleſh, but the Covenant on this occaſion ſolemnly ſtipulated, and the faithful obſervance of it, that ſaves us in Baptiſm. The efficacy of which Sacrament for our Juſtification is aſſured to us by our Lord's riſing again.

22. *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made ſubject unto him.*

22. Who, from and for his Sufferings and Humiliation here below, is now with his Humane Body veſted with Supreme Authority in Heaven, and Ruler of the whole Intellectual World. For of what degree or dignity ſoever the Spirits that compoſe it be, All of them are entirely ſubject to his Government.

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle for this Day, like the Day it ſelf, preſents to our Minds Two differing Views; The One, a Retroſpect upon our dying, The Other, A moſt comfortable Proſpect upon our Riſen, Lord. With regard to the Former, We are, by his Example, excited to Patience in our Sufferings, even when thoſe Sufferings are extreme and unjuſt. With regard to the Latter, we are informed, that our Lord returned to Life, by virtue of that Eternal Spirit, which, long before his Incarnation, ſtrove with ſinful Men, by ſeaſonable Inſtructions and Warnings, to prevent the diſmal Conſequences of a God provoked to Anger. The Inefficacy of which good Office brought Deſtruction upon the old World, except one Obedient Family, by the ſweeping of a Deluge, dreadful and general, as the Impieties that had let it in upon them.

That Deliverance we likewiſe learn from hence to have been a Figure of the Sacrament of Baptiſm, by which (as the Ark containing *Noah* and his Family was of the Church, in which) alone, (Ordinarily) Men can be ſaved from their Sins here, and everlaſting Death hereafter. The Efficacy of this Sacrament is here aſcribed, not to the outward Element applied to the Body, but to the inward Diſpoſition of the Mind, in Them

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who are received by it into this ſpiritual Ark. This Diſpoſition is to be expreſſed by declarations of the Parties willingneſs, to enter into Covenant with God, and to expect Salvation upon the Terms of the Goſpel. A part of Baptiſm ſo neceſſary, that it does not appear, that it anciently was, or that it ever ought to be, adminiſtred without ſuch Declaration. And therefore ſuch Conſent is rightly demanded of all Baptized Perſons: Expected from all of Years and Diſctetion to be given by themſelves: Accepted in Infants by the Charity of the Church, from Sureties in Their Name; but required to be perſonally ratified by Theſe too, in the too much neglected Rite of *Confirmation*; at a time, when they are capable of contracting for Their part of this Covenant.

The Salvation attained by thus entring into Covenant with God, is moſt rightfully aſcribed here to our Lord's Reſurrection. That being the Evidence, that the Sins he died for were fully expiated; and Immortality reſtored to the Nature in which he died. The Releaſe of our Surety was in all reaſonable conſtruction an acknowledgment, that our Debt was fully ſatisfied: And a ſufficient foundation for the firmeſt Faith in the *Merits of Him who died, and was buried, and roſe again for us.*

But Faith alone, we know, is not ſufficient. Every important Article of the Chriſtian Religion ought to have a powerful influence upon our Practice. And therefore neither do we conſider, nor believe, our Lord's Burial aright, unleſs That alſo be imitated and drawn into Example. 'Tis a pious Obſervation, frequent among the Fathers, that every one of the great Lines in the Scheme of our Redemption, was ſet for us to Copy after: And, That the principal Actions of our Bleſſed Saviour are to be lookt on, not only as Hiſtorical; but full of Myſtical Inſtruction, and Intimations of Somewhat to be done by every Chriſtian too; in correſpon-

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dence with their great Master. Nor is this to be thought a flight of warm Zeal, for Scripture it self abundantly justifies that Notion; which is indeed the plain importance of several Passages to the *Romans*, *Galatians*, and *Colossians*.

Now, as at other times the Apostle enlarges concerning our *being crucified*, *dying*, and *rising again with Christ*; So, in the *Sixth* to the *Romans*, he mentions, *Being buried with Christ by Baptism into Death*; and again, in the *Second* to the *Colossians*, *Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.* Ver. 11. Ver. 12.

These Expressions, whatever allusion they may have to that Ceremony, used in hotter Climates, of immersing the Body of the Baptised Person entirely, which answers to the Burial of Christ; as emerging out of the Water again resembles his Rising out of the Grave: Yet do they certainly imply a great deal more. Our Sins are said to *be born by Christ in his Own Body on the Tree*, *the Body of Sin to be crucified with him*; And, by parity of reason, to be buried in his Grave. As therefore, in the professions of Faith made at Baptism, every Christian declares his Belief, that the Body of Christ was really dead and buried; So he obliges himself to effect that upon his Own Sins and Lusts, which actually passed upon Christ's Natural Body. That is, To mortifie and kill his corrupt Affections and Desires, and not suffer them to act, and move, and draw him into Sin, any more than the Carkass, when the Soul is gone, and it is laid into the Earth, can any longer perform the Offices of a living and animated Body. And, as the Change of a Man from Evil to Good, consists in first *ceasing to do Evil*, and then *learning to do Well*; So we must first of all *put off the Old Man*, and extinguish the Principles of Corruption and Sin in our Hearts; before we can proceed to virtuous Dispositions and Actions, and be moved by the Principles of a new and spi-

ritual Life. The Former of theſe is imported by *dying to Sin*, and *dying with Chriſt*; As the Latter is denoted by being *Riſen with him*, and *quickened to Righteouſneſs* and true Holineſs, by the *ſame Spirit which raiſed Chriſt from the Dead.* As therefore the Death of Chriſt is amply confirmed by his being Buried; So We muſt, in proportion, ſo effectually put off our Luſts and Corruptions, as to ſhew, that they have no longer any Life or Power left in us. As again His Death and Burial led us to his Reſurrection, without which they had not anſwered the purpoſe of his dying; So to forſake our old Sins, and bury them in his Grave, does not anſwer the Character of Chriſtians, unleſs we complete the Work, by living after another manner, and teſtifie the power of his Spirit in us, by a new, and pure, and holy Converſation. And, becauſe This is what every one engages for, when he enters *into Covenant with Chriſt by Baptiſm*; Therefore every Chriſtian is ſaid to be *buried and to riſe with him* in that Holy Sacrament. Not only in regard of the Ceremonies repreſenting theſe Actions to our outward Senſes; But much more, in reſpect of the Conditions there undertaken for, and the efficacy of that Grace, which the outward Signs are conſtantly attended and ſeconded with; where the Wickedneſs and Ingratitude of the Party does not hinder and put a bar to it. Let us then (my Brethren) look upon our Selves in the Circumſtances, wherein Chriſt is repreſented this day, Dead to our Treſpaſſes and Sins, as He was to the World; Buried as he was, to ſhew, there are no remains of our former wicked Life in us. As he *died once* only, to *return no more to Corruption*, So let our Repentance and the Forſaking of our Sins, be without any wilful Relapſe; For otherwiſe we do not die, as he did, *once for all.* We incur the abſurdity of moving when we are dead, and of being buried alive, ſo long as our Corruptions live in us; And, as He roſe again to live for

for ever; So let us enter upon a new Courſe, to laſt as long as our Selves do upon Earth, and to be perfected by a glorious and bleſſed Immortality in Heaven.

The GOSPEL.

St. Matth. xxvii. 57.

57. *When the Even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joſeph, who alſo himſelf was Jeſus diſciple:*

58. *He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus: then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.*

59. *And when Joſeph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,*

60. *And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewen out in the rock; and he rolled a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre, and departed.*

61. *And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, ſitting over againſt the ſepulchre.*

62. *Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief Prieſts and Phariſees came together unto Pilate,*

63. *Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three days I will riſe again.*

64. *Command therefore that the ſepulchre be made ſure, until the third day, leſt his diſciples come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people, He is riſen from the dead: ſo the laſt errour ſhall be worſe than the firſt.*

65. *Pilate ſaid unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as ſure as you can.*

66. *So they went and made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.*

COMMENT.

IT is worth our Obſervation, that the Evangeliſts are not more Circumſtantial in any Particular, relating to Our Bleſſed Saviour; than in that part, which concerns his Burial. Which ſeems to be done, not ſo much for the ſake of any Conſequence that Action is of, conſidered apart by it ſelf, as for the ſervice it does to the proof of ſome things, which went before, and followed after it. For the Two great Points of the Chriſtian Religion being the Death and Reſurrection of Je-

ſus Chriſt; It was neceſſary, that all poſſible Conviction ſhould be given to the World, of theſe two moſt important Paſſages. Were we not well aſſured of his being really dead; We could not be certain, that an Atonement was made for the Sins of the World; And, had we any reaſonable ground to doubt the Truth of his Reſurrection, we could not depend upon that Atonement being accepted. Now what the Holy Spirit hath thought fit to record of his Burial is ſo ordered, as to leave no juſt ſuſpicion, Either that our Lord's Body was actually dead, or that the ſame Body, which ſo died, was actually reſtored to Life again. This is what the Goſpel for the Day gives very full Evidence of. Eſpecially, when conſidered with its Parallel Texts in the Other Evangeliſts, Which I ſhall call to my aſſiſtance in ſuch manner, as may beſt conduce to the making both this Death and Reſurrection of our Lord beyond all Contradiction clear, from his Burial now before us.

Now here we muſt obſerve,

I. *Firſt*, The Perſons concerned in this Action. And,

II. *Secondly*, The ſeveral Circumſtances of the Action it ſelf. After which.

III. *Thirdly*, I ſhall leave the whole upon you with ſome practical Inferences.

1. I begin with the Perſons concerned in this Action, The Principal of which was *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*. Of whom the Goſpels give us this farther deſcription, that he was a *rich Man*, and an *honourable Counſeller, a juſt Man and a good, One, who had not conſented to the Counſel and Deed of them* who perſecuted and condemned *Jeſus to Death*; but was himſelf a *Diſciple of His, though ſecretly for fear of the Jews.* In all which paſſages there is ſomething Material; As I ſhall ſhew, by ſpeaking very briefly to each of them, as they lie in order.

Ver. 57. Mark xv. 43. Luke xxiii. 50, 51. John xix. 28.

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His Riches and Honourable Station are mentioned, Not out of any Vanity and Oſtentation, that a Perſon of ſo conſiderable a Figure ſhould pay reſpect to the Body of our Bleſſed Maſter; But partly, to intimate the intereſt and eaſie acceſs he found with *Pilate*; and partly, to ſhew how ſtrangely God brought about an ancient Prophecy concerning the Meſſias, that, notwithſtanding the infamous manner of his dying, he ſhould yet *make his Grave with the Rich at his death.* Now This in it ſelf was a moſt unlikely thing. For the Bodies of them, that were crucified, did, by the Roman Laws, hang upon the Gibbet, expoſed to all the Injuries of Weather, and a prey for ravenous Beaſts and Fowls of the Air. And, though the Jewiſh Inſtitution did not allow of this Severity to the Dead, yet did they uſually bury their Malefactors in ſome publick neglected and ignominious Place. Hence the *Jews* themſelves beſought *Pilate*, that all the Bodies might be taken away, to prevent the profanation of their Great Feſtival, and the Breach of God's Ordinance, by their continuing upon the curſed Tree. And thus they diſpoſed of the two Thieves in all probability, as was uſual in all other Caſes of this Nature. But the making a diſtinction between Them and *Jeſus*, who was crucified with them, was the Act of *Joſeph.* He applied himſelf to the Governour, in whoſe diſpoſal the Bodies of executed Perſons were, and treated it with that becoming honour, which we ſhall have Occaſion to obſerve by and by.

Iſa. liii. 9.

Deut. xxi. 23.

In the mean while we are to take notice, that the next Character under which we find him is that of a *Counſeller.* Which denotes him to have been a Member of the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*, That very Aſſembly of Chief Prieſts and Rulers, which laid wait for *Jeſus*: Which charged him with Blaſphemy; Which uſed him with ſo much cruelty and contempt; Which, when their own Power would not extend to inflict that Death

determined for the *Meſſias*, Arraigned him of Sedition before *Pilate*. And, when he ſaw through the thickneſs of this frivolous pretence, and was diſpoſed to releaſe him, inſtigated the People to accept of a Robber and a Murtherer; and to demand, that He might be crucified. So that, when the Apoſtles had told us, that this Perſon was one of that Body; It was but neceſſary to acquit him from the imputation of the common Guilt; to ſatisfie the World, that, though he was of them, he did not act with them. And for this reaſon St. *Luke* clears him of having any hand in their Villanies, and diſtinguiſhes him from his wicked Fellows, by ſaying that *he was a good Man and a juſt*, and had not conſented to the *Counſel and Deed* of the reſt. Nay St. *Matthew* adds here, that, *He himſelf was Jeſus Diſciple*, but yet with ſome degree of infirmity; for St. *John* tells us, it *was ſecretly for fear of the Jews*. Many ſuch, he tells us, there were, among the Chief Rulers, who were convinced by his Doctrine and Miracles. But they kept their Opinion to themſelves, and had not the Courage to own it publickly. How long the reſt walked under this diſguiſe, we know not. But it may well ſeem ſtrange, that *Joſeph*, who never durſt openly profeſs a regard to *Jeſus*, while living; ſhould now, when he had ſuffered all the Ignominy of a Malefactor, and his Enemies thought they had effectually rid their hands of him, not ſtick to intereſt himſelf for the honourable Interment of a dead Maſter. That he ſhould expoſe himſelf to the Inſults and Contempt of his Brethren, for a Teacher, in all appearance loſt and gone; Who had not the hardineſs to acknowledge him, while the Power of his Inſtructions and Miracles ſpoke him more than Man, and had gained him a general Admiration. And yet, (to ſee the Efficacy of thoſe Impreſſions, which God makes upon Mens Minds, even at the moſt unlikely ſeaſons of prevailing) This Man, who durſt not join with Multitudes before, in paying

Jesus the least respect, ventures now to stand single, *goes in boldly to Pilate*, as St. *Mark* expresses it, and does the Office usual for dearest Friends and Relations. He begs the Body, that he might vindicate it from the contemptuous usage of common Malefactors; And thus to declare, that he thought him a Person so distant from what he had been represented, and put to death for; as even to be worthy the highest honours his Condition was capable of, and received with all the Affection and Respect, due to his own Kindred and Family. For all this is intended by laying him *in his own new Tomb*, and those other Circumstances contained in the Action it self.

2. St. *John* adds, that *Nicodemus* likewise contributed to this Funeral, by bringing a great quantity of Spices and Ointments, and so embalming the Body, as the Custom of that Country was, to preserve it from Corruption. All which seems to imply, that the Saying of *Jesus*, so often repeated, of his rising again the third day, had made but slender Impression upon them, As we indeed shall find hereafter, it did upon the Apostles themselves. God in his Wisdom suffering them to be unmindful of, or very little affected with a Persuasion, which had rendred all this care unnecessary; that so this Insensibility or Forgetfulness might make way for more satisfactory and unquestionable proofs of his Son's Resurrection.

I proceed now to my Second Head, where it will be necessary to observe these Few following Particulars.

I. *First*, The Preparation of the Body for Burial.

II. *Secondly*, The Interment it self.

III. *Thirdly*, The Description of the Place where he was laid.

1. *First*, Here is the Preparation of the Body for Burial, expressed by wrapping it in a *clean linen Cloth*. By this, no doubt, we are to understand all the burying

Clothes uſual among the *Jews*. Such as we find particularly deſcribed by St. *John* in his *Eleventh Chapter*. Where he mentions *Lazarus* coming out of his Grave *bound Hand and Foot, and his Face bound about with a Napkin*; And, in his *Twentieth Chapter*, where he tells us, that *Peter*, after our Lord's Reſurrection, went into the empty Sepulchre, *and ſaw the linen Clothes* lie in their due order, and the *Napkin that was about Jeſus's Head*, not *lying with the reſt of the Clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it ſelf.*

2. *Secondly*, The Next thing obſervable is the Interment it ſelf, deſcribed by *Joſeph*'s laying the Body thus wound and embalmed *in his own Tomb.* The *Jews* appear, by many paſſages in the Old Teſtament, to have been in all Ages extreamly ſolicitous concerning the Place of their Burial; To have eſteemed it a Curſe, not *to ſleep with their Fathers*, (as we often find it phraſed) that is, not to lie among thoſe of their own Race and Family. Hence ſuch as were Wealthy among them purchaſed parcels of Ground, that they might have a Property diſtinct from other People, and ſuffered none but thoſe of their own Houſe to partake in them. The Care of *Abraham* in buying a Field for this purpoſe, from the Children of *Heth*, ſeems to have proceeded from a deſire, that the Bodies of thoſe that worſhipped the One true God might not be mingled with Idolaters. And poſſibly the Field mentioned in this Chapter to be *bought for burying Strangers in*, might be intended to hinder Foreigners, or thoſe who were not entirely within the Covenant, from having, even in death, any Fellowſhip with thoſe, who lookt upon themſelves, as a holy and peculiar People of God. But the appropriating Sepulchres to particular Perſons and Families was in uſe long before Our Saviour's time. And this was done, by purchaſing ſome piece of Ground near their reſpective Cities, (for within the Cities none might be buried) and there making a convenient Repo-

Gen. xxiii.

ſitory for themſelves, and thoſe that belonged to them. Such was this of *Joſeph*, in a Garden, not far from the Place where our Lord was crucified; And, as a Mark of his great Veneration, here he depoſited the Body of *Jeſus*, where he deſigned to lay his Own, and Theirs, whom Nature and Affection had made deareſt and of moſt honourable regard to him.

And, having advanced thus far, I ought not to proceed, before putting you in mind, how unconteſtable a Proof theſe things are, that our Lord's Body was actually dead. *Pilate* was ſo cautious in the matter, that he would not grant *Joſeph*'s Requeſt, till the Centurion, who commanded the Guard, ordered to attend the Execution, had firſt ſatisfied him that *Jeſus* had been ſome time dead. *Joſeph* was his Diſciple, and his Friend; and would not have treated the Body of one, whom he honoured and loved, in ſuch a manner, as muſt needs have deſtroyed all remains of Life, had there been any in it. And I know not what Proof of this Matter can be poſſibly deſired more, than that a Man's Enemies have the killing, and his Friends have the burying, of him: The One will be ſure not to leave or deliver him up before he be dead; And the Other will be as careful, not to bury him till after he is ſo.

3. I come now to the *Third* Branch of my *Second* Head; Which conſiſts in a Deſcription of the Tomb, wherein our Lord's Body was laid. Every Circumſtance whereof is of Weight. And, as the former Particulars abundantly evince the Reality of his Death; So This is a ſtrong Confirmation to the Truth of his Reſurrection.

1. Now the Evangeliſt takes Notice, *Firſt* of all, that this was a *new Tomb*; And St. *Luke* expreſſes the ſame thing, by calling it a *Tomb wherein never man before was laid*. The Dead, among the *Jews*, were unclean, and whoſoever touched a Carkaſs, did thereby contract a Legal Pollution. It was not therefore fit for Him, who died not as other Men do, for the Puniſh-

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ment of their own Sins; For Him, upon whom not any Blemiſh of the Levitical Diſpenſation could ever take hold; For Him, who came to render the Ceremonial Ordinances uſeleſs, after a full Performance of them; But eſpecially for Him, to whoſe Humane Nature the Divine was inſeparably united, to lay that Body, with which God was eſſentially preſent, even in the Grave, among the putrified Remains of common Sinners. But, beſides the Indignity, which this would have been to that Fleſh ordained to ſee no *Corruption*, This is alſo a conſiderable Circumſtance for the Proof of his riſing again. We read, in the Old Teſtament, of a Man reſtored to Life, by being caſt into *Eliſha*'s Grave; Which was a Miracle owing to the Efficacy of that great Prophets Bones. Had therefore our Lord been laid, where any other Perſon had lain before; his Enemies might ſuſpect, that ſome of thoſe Others had riſen from the Dead; or at leaſt, that he had riſen by a Virtue derived from ſome of Them. But now, being the Firſt and the Only Perſon interred in this Tomb, When his Body left this Sepulchre empty, no Suſpicion could remain of its being any other Body than that, which *Joſeph* had taken down from the Croſs, and diſpoſed of in that Place; Or of his being reſtored to Life again, by any Virtue and Power but his own.

2. A *Second* Remark upon this Occaſion is, that his Tomb was *hewn out of a Rock*. This is agreeable to the Faſhion of that Country, where they chooſe to make their Sepulchres, as durable as might be. In order hereunto they cut them in ſolid Stone; and made as many Niches of the Proportion of a Humane Body, as they deſigned Perſons to be depoſited in them. And This obviates another Objection induſtriouſly put about by the *Jews*, *that his Diſciples ſtole the Body away*, and then impoſed upon the World, with a confident, but falſe Report, of their Maſter's being riſen from the Dead. Now ſuch a Sepulchre as this, was not capable of being

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undermined, or having any Conveyance made for removing the Body, as looſe Earth might have been. There could be no poſſible way for the Perſon depoſited in a Place ſo contrived, to get out again, except only at the Mouth or Door of the Cave, by which he was at firſt laid into it. And This too was rendred as impracticable as the former, by that which the Evangeliſt hath told us in the next Words, which is,

3. *Thirdly*, That *Joſeph rolled a great Stone to the Door of the Sepulchre*. This Stone, St. *Mark* obſerves, was very great. So great that the Women who came, in the Morning of our Lord's Reſurrection, with a pious Intent to do their laſt Honours to him, were in pain to think, what Aſſiſtance they ſhould find, ſufficient for rolling it away, and ſo getting a free Acceſs to the Body. All which confutes that fond Opinion of his Diſciples ſtealing him away: But yet much more ſo does that vain Caution uſed by the Phariſees in the latter End of this Chapter. Who, to make all, as they imagined, ſure, obtained of *Pilate*, to have the Stone ſealed, and the Sepulchre watched by a ſtrong Guard of Soldiers. This Centry would not ſuffer the Body to be conveyed out by this, nor the Nature of the Place, by any other, Way. Our Lord himſelf, had he not been more than Man, could not have forced a Paſſage out. And we are told accordingly, that a Divine Power burſt all theſe Bars aſunder; An Earthquake and an Angel rolled away the Stone; And that, by an Operation ſo amazing, that the Keepers could not withſtand, could not ſuſtain it; for *they became all as dead men, trembling for fear, and running affrighted into the City to tell what was done.*

Thus you ſee of what mighty Significance it is to us, that ſuch a punctual Deſcription is given the World of our Bleſſed Lord's Burial, and all the Circumſtances relating to it. The Perſons concerned, The Manner of treating his Body, The Place where it was laid, All contributing

tributing great Strength to thoſe Two moſt important Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, the Death and Reſurrection of *Jeſus*. I proceed now in the Laſt Place, to lay before you ſome Reflections from this Subject, and what hath been ſaid upon it. And they are theſe that follow.

1. *Firſt*, We may learn from hence, why the Chriſtian Church hath been ſo careful to inſert into her Creeds and ſolemn Confeſſions of Faith this Burial of Chriſt, as well as his Crucifixion, Death, and Reſurrection; Becauſe this hath ſo cloſe a Connexion with thoſe other Fundamental Doctrines, that we muſt have wanted a great and very ſubſtantial part of the Evidence, both of his being Dead, and of his Riſing again, had we not unqueſtionable Aſſurances of his being Buried.

2. *Secondly*, Here we have an Example of that common Humanity of burying the Dead. This is what all Countries have, according to their reſpective Cuſtoms, been careful of; as a reſpect due to that dwelling of Fleſh, once honoured with ſo noble an Inhabitant, as a Rational Soul. And Mankind ſeem to have been all along very tender, and much concerned for it. Not only from the Practice of the thing to the generality of People, but by making it a Puniſhment, and Mark of Infamy and the laſt Deteſtation, to deny this Privilege to ſuch Malefactors, as have forfeited all Right to the Reſpects, which Others challenge from us. Particularly among Chriſtians, the Cuſtom of burning the Dead, and preſerving their Aſhes hath been diſuſed, and the Bodies of their Deceaſed laid up entire in the Grave, with ſuch Solemnities, and in ſuch Manner, as might intimate their Belief of a future Reſurrection. And, though the vain Expence of pompous Funerals be one of thoſe Extravagancies, which proceed from Pride and Luxury; yet the Pattern here before us will bear us out in all the Expreſſions of a decent Reſpect for the Memory of Thoſe, whom God takes away from us. We

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are not to be condemned for every ſort of Coſt upon theſe Occaſions; As may be plainly gathered from that remarkable Paſſage of our Lord's commending highly the Piety of that Woman, who ſpent Three hundred Pennyworth of Spikenard very precious, to anoint his Body to the Burial: He would not have promiſed, that this Action ſhould be ſpread, far and wide, as the Goſpel it ſelf, in her Praiſe; He would not have ſuffered ſuch honourable mention to be made of *Joſeph* and *Nicodemus*, and the Women, who brought Spices and Ointments to his Sepulchre, if theſe had been blameable Expences. And what this Pattern of Humility and Meekneſs allowed, it would be too delicate a Niceneſs in Us to condemn. If the Regard due to a Humane Soul rendred ſome Reſpect to the Dead a Principle, that manifeſted it ſelf to the common Senſe of all Nations; ſhall we think, that leſs Care is due to the Bodies of Chriſtians, who once entertained a more glorious Inhabitant, and were living Temples of the Holy Ghoſt? Thoſe Bodies, which were conſecrated to the Service of God, which bore their part in the Duties of Religion, and fought the good Fight of Faith and Patience, Self-denial and Mortification, and underwent the Fatigue of many Hardſhips, and Afflictions, for the ſake of Piety and Virtue? Thoſe Bodies, which we own to be ſtill under the Care of a Divine Providence? And what God diſdains not to take into his Protection, we ought not to look upon, as Out-caſt and common Dung, or deſpiſe as unworthy our Regard. Thoſe Bodies, which we believe ſhall one Day be *faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious Body*, awakened again from their Sleep of Death, have all their ſcattered Particles of Duſt ſummoned together into their due Order, and made Partakers of the ſame Glory with their immortal Souls, as once they were of the ſame Sufferings and Good Works: Thoſe Bodies, which are Members of Chriſt, and are already, in Him their Repreſentative, exalted to the Throne of God on

high. These Considerations prevailed with the Primitive Christians, to bury their Dead with much Solemnity, and particular Testimonies of grave and decent Respect; To commit Them to the Ground with Prayers for their Restitution, with Praises of the Virtues they had been useful in the Exercise of, while living; and with ample Recommendations of their good Example, to the Imitation of those that survived. All which was so far from being reproached with Superstition, that it is ever reported as a laudable Custom, and such as had something in it so engaging, so agreeable to the Notions of civilized nature, as to have a very considerable Influence upon the Heathens, who observed and admired it. It became Instrumental in the disposing them to a very favourable Opinion first, and afterwards, upon a closer Enquiry, to embracing the Christian Faith, where these Decencies and tender Regards, to deceased Friends and good People, were so constantly, so carefully, so religiously practised.

Lastly, The Consideration of our Blessed Saviour's Burial may help to rectify our Notions concerning Death and the Grave. That Holy Body of His, which, by descending into the River of *Jordan*, sanctified the Water, hath in some Sense sanctified the Dust of the Earth, by condescending to be laid in it. It hath changed our Graves from Seats of Rottenness and everlasting Corruption, to Beds and Chambers, whither, after his Example, we retire, and lie down a while; but it is only to refresh our selves, and rest from our Labours. There is a Principle of Life in us all the while, though for the present it be bound up in Sleep, and cease from Action. Our Night will not last always, but, after we have taken our soft Repose, the Day will dawn, and we shall be awakened, and rise more fresh than from our Beds, full of Life and Vigour. And oh! that we could reflect seriously upon this, and live like Men that look for such a Day! That Glorious, that amazing Day, when the

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Dry Bones ſhall live, when the Priſons of the Earth ſhall be unlocked, and the Mould quickened into Life: when every Soul ſhall take her proper Body; And the Earth, and the Sea, and every Element bring back theſe ſcattered Particles, and reſtore them to their primitive Form. When the Power of God Almighty, which firſt made Man out of Duſt, and that Duſt out of nothing, ſhall once more exert it ſelf, by making that Duſt the Man it was before. And Happy Thoſe Bleſſed Men, who then can bear the Sound of the laſt Trump; Whoſe Conſcience do not then ſting them with Terror; nor the gnawing Worm within anticipate the Condemnation of the Dreadful Tribunal. Who can expreſs the Comfort of thoſe Righteous Souls, who then ſhall meet their Saviour in the Clouds; Not as an angry Judge, but as a Friend and Deliverer; As One who comes to reſcue them from Rottenneſs and Corruption, to crown their Faithfulneſs, and give them full Poſſeſſion of their Hopes: Nay to pour upon them the Riches of his Mercy, and to fix them in the Enjoyment of Bliſs unſpeakable, unchangeable, and full of Glory. For *ſuch Honour have all his Saints*; and this is the Portion of every One *that loves the Lord Jeſus in Sincerity and Truth.* And, that it may be Ours, as it behoves us conſtantly to endeavour, ſo are we taught very excellently to pray, in that pious Collect of our Church on this Day. And O that it may pleaſe thee, Good Lord, to *grant, that as we are baptized into the Death of thy Bleſſed Son our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, ſo by continually mortifying our corrupt Affections, we may be buried with Him; and that, through the Grave and Gate of Death, we may paſs to our joyful Reſurrection, for his Merits, who died, and was buried, and roſe again for us, the ſame Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

EASTER

EASTER DAY.

The COLLECT.

ALmighty God, who through thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome Death, and opened unto Us the gate of everlasting Life; We humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special Grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

1 Cor. xv. 26, 54.
2 Tim. i. 10.
Heb. ii. 14, 15.
Rev. i. 18.
xx. 6, 14. xxi. 4.
John v. 24.
xi. 26.
Heb. x. 19.
Rom. viii. 11.

The EPISTLE.

Coloss. iii. 1.

1. *IF ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

2. *Set your affection on things above, and not on things on the earth.*

PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. If then, by the profession of Faith made in your Baptism, and a newness of Life agreeable thereto, ye are conformed to Christ's Resurrection; consider where he is, and let your Desires and Cares be there also; even up in Heaven, and the Glories of that Blessed Place.

3, 4. The Spiritual Life ye now lead, ye live by him; the immortal one ye hope to lead, ye owe to him your Title and Hopes of: And though the Excellence of this do not yet appear, because, He who now lives it in our Humane Nature, is absent and unseen: Yet, when he comes again, the Glories of it shall be manifested in the Person, not of Him only, but of every good Christian.

3. *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

4. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

5, 6, 7. In the mean while be careful to subdue those Lusts, which have no farther Ends than Earthly Pleasures, (and which, (with respect to Sin in general, sometimes called the Body of Sin) may be stiled Members of that Body.) For These are great Provocations to God, and were renounced by you, at your Conversion to Christianity.

5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

6. *For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:*

7. *In the which ye also walked some time, while ye lived in them.*

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

THE Epiſtle for this Day is deſigned to enforce the Duties and Virtuous Diſpoſitions, which are natural Conſequences of the Belief of a Saviour riſen from the Dead. Whom when we conſider, as now in full Poſſeſſion of Immortality, living and reigning in Heaven in Humane Nature; His Happineſs is the Pledge of all Theirs, who, partaking of that Nature, ſhall perform the Conditions left upon them, as neceſſary to qualify them for partaking in the ſame Happineſs alſo. Of theſe the Apoſtle mentions Two, which do indeed include all the reſt. (1.) *The ſetting our Affections on things above.* Of which, and the motive to it here, (this Volume having already exceeded its juſt Meaſures) I rather chooſe to treat, upon a fit Occaſion like to offer it ſelf very ſhortly. The *Second* Thing, which is truly in order to the Former, is an effectual ſubduing of thoſe Lufts and inordinate Appetites, which, above all things, obſtruct that Heavenly Temper of Mind. Of Theſe, and the Arguments urged here againſt them, the Provocation they give to God, and the Contradiction they are to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, I have already had Occaſion to diſcourſe at large, in the Epiſtles for the *Second* and *Third Sundays* in *Lent*, to which I refer my Reader. Aſcenſion-Day.

At preſent I only add, That, As our firſt Entrance into Covenant with God by Baptiſm, (which is an Emblem of our Lord's Death and Reſurrection) is the Spiritual Birth of a Chriſtian; So the conſcientious Perſeverance in the Obedience there covenanted for, is his Spiritual Life. Both which we moſt truly acknowledge owing to the *dwelling* of that *Spirit in us, which raiſed Chriſt from the dead.* And, if beſides we reflect on the Numbers, who in the Primitive Church were received by that Sacrament, which at Rom. viii. 11.

this Feſtival Yearly began to be moſt ſolemnly adminiſtred, and whereunto the preceding Faſt of Lent was a ſolemn Preparation; Theſe things laid all together may ſuffice to ſet the Wiſdom of Our Church above any juſt Exception, in appointing a Collect, not only pious and uſeful, but alluding, and by no means foreign, to the Subject of the Day.

The GOSPEL.

PARAPHRASE.

S. John xx. 1.

1. THE *firſt day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene, early when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre.*

1. The Sabbath being now over, in reverence to which, the Women who had prepared Spices and Ointments, to embalm our Lord's Body, had forborn attempting to do it hitherto; (Compare *Luke* xxiii. 56. *Matth.* xxviii. 1.) As ſoon as the Morning began to dawn on the firſt Day of the Week; *Mary Magdalene*, and *Mary* the Mother of *James* and *Joſes*, *Salome*, *Joanna*, and ſome other devout Women that had followed *Jeſus* from *Galilee*, (Compare *Luke* viii. 3. xxiv. 10. *Matth.* xxviii. 1. *Mark* xvi. 1.) having before obſerved the Sepulchre, and the poſition of the Body, (*Luke* xxiii. 55.) came with Intention to anoint it. In their Paſſage they had repreſented to themſelves the Difficulty of removing the Stone, which had been rolled to ſhut up the Cave, and ſealed with *Pilate*'s own Signet. (*Matth.* xxvii. 60, 66. *Mark* xvi. 3.) But arriving at the Place, they found the Stone removed to their Hands, and the Acceſs open to the Cave: and in the Grave it ſelf Two Angels ſitting, by whom they were told, that Jeſus was not there, but was riſen; as he had before declared he would do. (*Matth.* xxviii. 2,--8. *Mark* xvi. 5,--8. *Luke* xxiv. 2,--9.

2. *Then ſhe runeth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other diſciple, whom Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

2. With this Account much aſtoniſhed, and affrighted at the Viſion of Angels, they haſten back to the Place, where the Eleven Apoſtles, and ſome other Believers were aſſembled; (*Mark* xvi. 8. *Matth.* xxviii. 8. *Luke* xxiv. 10.) and, having made no mention of what they had ſeen and heard to any Perſon till they came thither; *Mary Magdalene*, accompanied with, and in the Name of, the other Women, acquainted them with all that had paſſed, addreſſing her ſelf more particularly to *Peter* and *John*.

3. *Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the ſepulchre.*

4. *So they ran both together, and the other diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre.*

5. *And he ſtooping down and looking in, ſaw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.*

6. *Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen clothes lie,*

7. *And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it ſelf.*

6, 7. The Grave-clothes here mentioned, and the manner of their being wrapped about the Body, will be better underſtood, if we conſult the Deſcription of *Lazarus*, when raiſed by our Lord. (Chap. xi. 44.)

8. *Then went in alſo that other diſciple, which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw and believed.*

9. *For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead.*

8, 9. St. *John* now believed the whole Account given him by *Mary*, of the Earthquake, the Angels, &c. Or, Upon this Evidence, he believed our Lord to be riſen; though not upon the Evidence of the Prophecies concerning him; which as yet were not ſufficiently underſtood by the Apoſtles.

10. *Then the diſciples went away again unto their own home.*

COMMENT.

HOW different, my Brethren, is This Morning's Solemnity from thoſe which lately called us to the Houſe of God! How happy the Change from Lamentation, and Mourning, and Woe, the Tragedy of a Bleeding and dying Saviour, to Joy and Gladneſs, and the Triumphs of a Living and Victorious One? *For this is the Day which the Lord hath made.* He hath made it high and Holy above the reſt, by riſing from the Dead; By being born a ſecond time; Born from the Womb of the Earth; Born now, not ſo as to prove himſelf Man, but God. This is that moſt myſterious Day, that opened the Gates of Hell, and brought a Releaſe to the Priſoners of the Grave; That turned our Saviour's Croſs, into a laſting Trophy, and brought Honour to that once accurſed Tree; That changed his Crown of Thorns into a Ray of Glory, and, by a wonderful Effect, produced Immortality out of Death, and everlaſting Renown out

of Shame and Contempt. This is that Day, peculiar to Chriſtians; and which diſtinguiſhes Us from all the World beſides. The Day of our Lord's Nativity Jews and Gentiles will confeſs; That of his Paſſion all the Adverſaries of our Religion boaſt of, ſuppoſing they had foiled and vanquiſhed this Champion of Souls; But This Day of his Reſurrection none but We can celebrate, becauſe none but We acknowledge, that he came off with Conqueſt, and defeated all that Malice, which endeavoured his utter Deſtruction. Let Us therefore be glad and rejoice in this Chriſtian Jubilee, for our laſt and moſt formidable Enemy is now deſtroyed. All his Attempts upon the Captain of our Salvation were weak and vain, and all the Force of Hell cannot now prevail againſt them that fight under his Standard. For this is our Security, This our Rejoicing, that the *Lord is riſen*, *Yea the Lord is riſen indeed. The Lamb, who was ſlain, now liveth again, and behold he is alive for evermore; and hath the Keys of Death and Hell.* So eſſential, and ſo diſtinguiſhing a Mark of a Chriſtian, and ſo juſt a Joy is That, which the Apoſtles firſt, and after them the Churches of God, put on this Day. This was the only thing, that could put an End to the Sorrows, and Doubts, and confounding Fears, the Terrors and ſad Miſgivings of the Diſciples. They had indeed ſome Intimations given them, by our Lord in his Life-time, that the third Day ſhould reſtore him; But the thing it ſelf of riſing from the Dead was ſo exceeding ſtrange, ſo wholly new, that it made little Impreſſion upon their Minds. Or if it had, Grief and Diſorder had quite raced them out, and all thoſe Thoughts expired with their Maſter upon the Croſs. Affliction ſeems to have had the ſame Effect upon the Apoſtles, which it generally hath upon melancholy and dejected Spirits. The poſſeſſing them with ſtrong Prejudices and Diſtruſts, and not ſuffering them to ſee ſo much as the Poſſibility of an Event moſt deſira-

Rev. i. 18.

ble to them. The firſt hint they had, was from *Mary Magdalene* and other zealous Women; Who, as ſoon as the Sabbath was over, went early with a preparation of Spices and Ointments, to pay their laſt Reſpects of embalming our Lord's Body. Theſe return with the ſurprizing account, of the Stone being rolled away from the door of the Cave, and the Sepulchre found open. Upon this Meſſage *Peter* and *John* reſolve to ſatisfie themſelves, and eagerly make toward the Place. *John* contents himſelf with ſtooping down and looking in, but *Peter*, ſomething more curious, goes into the very place where the Body had lain; And there he ſees the *linen Clothes lie, And the Napkin, that was about his Head, not lying with the linen Clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it ſelf.* This aſtoniſhing *ſight invites the Other Diſciple to take a cloſer view too. And accordingly He alſo went in, aud ſaw, and believed.* But there is reaſon enough to ſuſpect, that all he believed as yet, was no more, than what *Mary* had told them at the Second Verſe; *that the Lord was taken away out of the Sepulchre*, and ſhe could not tell what was become of him. For, that all theſe Circumſtances convinced them, that he was alive again, and had removed himſelf, ſeems not very likely from what follows in the 9th Verſe, That as yet *they knew not the Scriptures that he muſt riſe again from the dead.* That is, They had not conſidered, or did not underſtand the neceſſity of the *Meſſiah*'s Reſurrection; And ſo never recollected, that, either their Maſter muſt have been falſe in all his pretenſions of that kind, or he muſt have revived again, and left the Grave, according to the time and manner, they ſaw it now done in.

As no truth then is of more importance to the Chriſtian Religion, ſo none had greater care taken than this, to ſtrengthen the belief of it. The Teſtimony of Angels, of Diſciples, of Women, of Numbers of People; The Converſation of forty Days, The Teſtimony of the

Elements themſelves; The Earth trembling and quaking, as if in Pangs and Travel to diſcharge this New Birth,

Matth. xxvii. 52, 53.

The Teſtimony of others, whoſe Bodies appeared in the Holy City, Nay the Teſtimony of the moſt inveterate Enemies of Chriſt. For even the *Jews* themſelves, by advancing ſo incredible a Story, as that of his Diſciples ſtealing him away, do in effect confeſs and corroborate a Truth, which they ſo very weakly endeavour to deſtroy.

Among ſo great variety of Proofs I ſhall confine my ſelf to thoſe within the Compaſs of this Goſpel. And here what I ſhall obſerve to you will come under theſe Two Heads.

Firſt, The Circumſtances in which theſe Diſciples found the Sepulchre.

Secondly, Their great ſlowneſs in apprehending and believing our Lord's Reſurrection. Theſe Two Obſervations make up the ſubſtance of the Words. And it ſhall be my buſineſs to ſhew, that Both theſe things contributed very much to the proof of this Article of our Faith, that Chriſt did really riſe again from the Dead.

Firſt, The Circumſtances, in which the Diſciples found the Sepulchre, were a very conſiderable Proof of the Reality of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and the ſtrongeſt Confutation imaginable, of that frivolous pretence, put about by the Chief Prieſts, of the Diſciples ſtealing him away. Their unneceſſary Caution was moſt happily made an Occaſion of rendring that unqueſtionable, which they deſigned eſpecially to prevent, *(viz.)* The Opinion of Chriſt's riſing the third Day. For (as we

Matth. xxvii.

Yeſterday were told) to this End they procure a Guard of the Governor to watch the Cave, and contrive that the Stone rolled to cloſe up the door of it, ſhould be ſealed with his own Signet. But, when they found all this impertinent Care

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of theirs had no effect; and the Soldiers ran frighted away with the Earthquake and Viſion of Angels, and related what had happened; Then they bribed them with large Gifts, and promiſes xxviii. of Security and Pardon, to ſpread abroad a report, that his Diſciples had ſurpriſed the Grave, while the Keepers were aſleep; And, having privately conveyed away the Body, gave out, that he had made his Words good, in riſing again the third day. A moſt unhappy Pretence; and ſuch a One, as ſeems to carry a preſent Infatuation of Mind along with it. For, Who, that thinks at all, would ſuffer himſelf to be deceived, by a Lye, that plainly diſcovers its own falſhood; and is ſo far from being true, that it is not poſſible it ſhould be ſo? For, as St. *Auguſtine* in a juſt Indignation expoſtulates the Caſe with the Soldiers: *Ye wicked, corrupt, ſenſeleſs Wretches; Either ye were awake or aſleep; If awake, it was your buſineſs to ſecure the Body, from being ſtollen away; If aſleep; then your own Words diſprove you; For, granting this, it was impoſſible, you ſhould either know what was done, or who the Perſons were that did it.* So ill a Contriver is even the Father of Lyes himſelf, as ſometimes to detect himſelf; and to ſerve no other End, but only branding the Believer with the Scandal of Eaſineſs, or Perverſeneſs of Temper, and covering the Relator with Shame. And ſure the Truth never ſhines ſo bright, as when the Oppoſitions, that ſtrive to darken it, are plainly ſeen thorow, and under an evident neceſſity of being falſe.

That *Romans*, whoſe Military Diſcipline was ſo exceeding ſtrict, ſhould neglect their Poſt upon ſo extraordinary an Emergency, and when ſuch particular Zeal and Diligence had been uſed; is as extravagant an Imagination, as a Man could ever think of, except that Other of his Diſciples ſtealing him away. For, Are not Theſe the very Men, that, upon the firſt Aſſault

in the Garden, all forſook him and fled? They durſt not ſtand by him even then, when he declared it in his power to call for *twelve Legions of Angels* to his reſcue; and have they now the Confidence to come in a Body, and bear away his Corpſe? They had but *two Swords* among them all before; and He, who had the Courage to uſe one of them, durſt not afterwards ſo much as own any knowledge of, or dependance on his Maſter; And is the Caſe now changed ſo monſtrouſly, that theſe poor, naked, diſpirited Creatures ſhould attempt a Detachment of Armed Men, whoſe Order and Buſineſs was to expect, and be provided for them? Is This a likely thing, that They, who durſt not ſo much as appear in publick, but aſſembled themſelves privately, and ſhut up their Doors, for fear of the *Jews*, ſhould invade a Strong Guard; that They ſhould all on a ſudden grow Valiant, or rather indeed Foolhardy, to this degree? When He, in whom they truſted, was dead, when the Stouteſt of them all, even while he was yet alive, trembled at the Voice of a ſilly Servant, and did the moſt cowardly Action in the world, that of affirming, nay ſwearing to a Falſhood, to deliver himſelf from the danger of an inquiſitive and buſie Tongue? Theſe are Difficulties, never to be got over, and ſuch as will not ſuffer any Man, that conſiders them, to believe that idle pretence, which the *Jews* ſo induſtriouſly reported, to diſprove our Saviour's Reſurrection.

But, Let us for once ſuppoſe, what yet is moſt improbable, that the Diſciples had Courage enough for ſo deſperate an undertaking; Yet Robberies, we know, are committed in haſte and hurry, and every Moment is tedious, to Men under confuſion and fear of diſcovery. If therefore the removing of the Body had been their work, and they had ſnatched an Opportunity for it, while the Centinels ſlept; Would they not have taken it away as it was, without ſtaying to unbind and undreſs it? Do Thieves, after they have rifled a Houſe,

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uſe to ſpend time in putting things in order again? And is it not agreeable to all the Reaſon in the world, that theſe Perſons would have been rather ſolicitous to make their Eſcape, than to ſtrip the Corpſe, to fold up the Clothes, and to lay them apart from one another in their proper places? That which renders this ſtill more and more unconceivable, is the Cuſtome of Interment in that Country. Which therefore St. *John* does not forget to mention particularly; As being in truth a fit Preparation, and proper Strengthening to the Account he gives here. For at the 39th and 40th *Verſes* of the foregoing Chapter, he acquaints us, that *Nicodemus brought a mixture of Myrrh and Aloes about a hundred pound weight; And they took the Body of Jeſus and wound it in linen Clothes, with the Spices, as the Manner of the Jews is to bury*, Now theſe Spices were uſed to preſerve the Body from Corruption, Which they did, by being a ſort of Shell, or Cruſt over it. And this their glutinous Subſtance qualified them for. But the ſame glewy Nature muſt needs make the Clothes they were uſed with, cling very cloſe and faſt to the Skin, and not to be drawn off without a great deal of time and difficulty. When therefore theſe Coverings were found, regularly pulled off, wrapped up, and laid by; This plainly ſhews the removing of *Jeſus*'s Body to be a work of leiſure, and much deliberation; Such, as by no means agrees with the confuſion and haſte of things done by ſtealth. Nor can it enter into any ſober Man's Thoughts, that They, who come privily and in danger of their Lives, ſhould ſo far venture the awaking of the Guard, and trifle away their time in theſe ſo hazardous, ſo unneceſſary Niceties. So that, had the Lord been taken away, we cannot but think they would have taken him as he was, which would have ſerved Their turn very well. But, ſince the Sepulchre was found empty, and the Grave-clothes left behind; We have great reaſon to conclude, that He took himſelf away.

And,

And, by the ſame Divine Power, which brought him into the World of a Mother ſtill a Virgin, that he raiſed his own dead Body to Life a ſecond time, without breaking the Seal, or removing the Stone. For this, we are expreſly told, was not His, but the Angels doing. And done, not to make him paſſage, but to make the acceſs to the Tomb eaſie, and give opportunity for diſcovering this wonderful Work of God. Theſe Objections, I ſay, lie againſt the *Jews* Fiction, that the Diſciples had ſtollen their Lord; and *Mary*'s fear, that ſome Other had conveyed him away. And if *Peter* and *John* had attended to what they ſaw, their own Eyes, and their own Reaſon might have convinced them, that This was *Jeſus* his own doing, how marvellous ſoever it might ſeem to them at that time. But, even in this too, there was a particular Providence. For Their very Slowneſs in apprehending and believing the Reſurrection of Chriſt, did it Self contribute much to the perſuading Men, and proving the Reality of it. Which was the *Second* thing I propoſed to ſhew, and now proceed to prove it accordingly, upon theſe Two accounts.

Matth. xxviii.

Firſt, That Backwardneſs of Believing in the Diſciples added to the Evidences given of this Reſurrection, and miniſtred occaſion for ſeveral moſt undeniable Proofs, which otherwiſe had not been neceſſary to them. And indeed their Backwardneſs was ſo great, that one would wonder, how they ſhould be ſo exceeding ſtupid and heavy, had not God in his Wiſdom ſo ordered the matter, that Their Incredulity ſhould be Our Confirmation. The Certainty of a Reſurrection in general our Lord had oftentimes foretold; And that *all who were in the Grave ſhould one day hear his Voice and come forth.* The neceſſity of his Own Reſurrection, and the ſtated time of it, he had expreſly declared; And, when he gave them warning at any time of his approaching Death, he never failed to ſup-

Joh. v. 29.

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port them withal, by an assurance, that he would rise again the third day. Notwithstanding all which Warnings, The Women, who returned from the Sepulchre, and related their Vision of Angels, though Persons of known Integrity, were yet but indifferently received. Their Words (says St. *Luke*) *seemed to them as idle Tales, and they believed them not.* Luke xxiv. 11. The greatest use, that was made of it, seems to be the putting *Peter* and *John* here, upon examining matters more strictly. And yet even They do not appear to have made all those Conclusions from the posture they found things in, as have been shewn fairly and naturally to be gathered from it. After this he appeared in Person to *Mary Magdalene*, as the following part of this Chapter acquaints us: But with what Success, as to the Disciples, St. *Mark* tells us Chap. xvi. Ver. 10, 11. For She *went and told them that had been with him*, as *they mourned and wept*, But They, when they heard that he was *alive, and had been seen of her, believed her not.* The same Day Two of them went to a Village in the Country, and he appeared to Them; walked with them, discoursed them largely, expounded the Old Testament Prophesies concerning himself, and still their Eyes and their Understandings were blinded, *that they could not see him.* But, by Breaking of Bread the discovery was made at last, and great haste was made to carry back these joyful Tydings to the rest of their Company. But when *they went and told it to the residue, neither believed they them*, says St. *Mark.* xvi. 13. After this, he resolves to give them Ocular Demonstration, and shews himself to the *Eleven*, upbraided them with their unbelief, that They gave no credit to Others, who had seen him before. But now they were so far from trusting Others, that they durst not trust even their Own Eyes. *They were terrified and affrighted, supposing that they had seen a Spirit.* Luke xxiv. 37. To deli-

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ver them from this Fear, he commands them to handle him, and ſo convince themſelves, that he had Fleſh and Bones, and was no airy Subſtance or empty Apparition. Still they were more amazed than convinced. And therefore, to remove all Scruple, *while they yet believed not for joy and wondred, he called for Meat, and took it, and did eat before them.* This, one would think, ſhould give Satisfaction to the moſt Sceptical Doubters. But *Thomas*, who happened not to be there at that time, would not be content even ſo. He required a farther confirmation yet, which was, the Marks and Wounds made by his Crucifixion. And to this likewiſe *Jeſus* condeſcends, for, at Another viſit to the Diſciples, he cauſed *Thomas to truſt his hand into his Side, which the Spear had pierced, and his Fingers into the print of the Nails*, that faſtned him to the Croſs; and ſo gained the acknowledgment of this ſo very cautious Perſon too. Again, to make all complete, that could be any way neceſſary, he likewiſe appeared another time at the Sea ſide, and there made himſelf known to them, by commanding a wonderful draught of Fiſhes. Thus his Divine Wiſdom ſaw it expedient (as we expreſs it in one of our Collects) to ſuffer them to doubt, for the more confirmation of the Faith. And he managed thoſe Doubts ſo, that no Circumſtance ſhould be wanting at laſt to prove his Reſurrection. And, though he let them in to thoſe Proofs by degrees, as they were fit for them, and able to bear them; yet he did it ſo artificially and prudently too, that every freſh inſtance confirmed and added ſomething to thoſe that went before. The empty Sepulchre confirmed the Womens report; Chriſt's appearance to *Mary Magdalene* ſhewed he was alive; That to the Diſciples at *Emmaus* proved that it was at leaſt the Spirit of Chriſt, by expounding the Prophecies, and breaking of Bread; That to the *Eleven* ſhewed the reality of his Body; That Conviction given *Thomas* proved

Joh. xx. 24, 30.

Joh. xxi.

ved it the ſelf ſame Body, that had been crucified; And that Miracle of the Fiſhes argued the ſame Divine Nature, ſtill united to the ſame Body. So that, though here be many Evidences, yet none of them are ſuperfluous. Every one hath ſomething new, and peculiarly its own; and All together are a Demonſtration, ſo full and Satisfactory of the ſame Chriſt, the ſame God and Man in one Perſon, returned from the dead; that we have great Reaſon to praiſe God for ſuffering the Diſciples to doubt ſo much and ſo long; ſince by their *not believing, but becauſe they had ſeen*, there is the greater Security given to Us, *who have not ſeen, and yet have believed*. For

Secondly, This contributed likewiſe to the ſatisfying Others in the Truth of our Lord's Reſurrection, as it took away all thoſe Prejudices, that might riſe, and uſually do riſe, upon the firſt Reporters taking up things too haſtily. Theſe Diſciples were to be (as they ſtile themſelves) the Witneſſes of our Lord's Reſurrection. And therefore it was of great Concern to the World, upon what Convictions they embraced a Truth, which Others, who could not be Eye-witneſſes of it, were to reſt upon Their Teſtimony for. The Apoſtles, we know, were plain Men, and conſtant followers of our Lord; ſo that both their Ability and their Honeſty might be called in queſtion, upon this Occaſion. The Simplicity of their Life and Converſation, though it might free them from the Suſpicion of deceiving others, yet could not give any Aſſurance, that they were not deceived themſelves. And we know, Men are often exceeding poſitive in Things that afterwards prove to be falſe, and might have been detected ſooner, if they had had either the Judgment, or the Patience, to examine them ſtrictly. Eſpecially too, if there be any Intereſt concerned in the Caſe, how great a Step towards the believing a thing True, is the wiſhing that it were ſo? And what Caſe could lie more open to this Suſpicion,

than

than that now before us? Upon Chriſt's riſing, or not riſing from the Dead, would depend the Authority of his Doctrine, and all his Miracles. Himſelf had referred the whole Iſſue to this laſt, this important Sign; that, as *Jonas was three days and three nights in the Whale's belly, ſo the Son of Man ſhould be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth.* So that all His Reputation, and all Theirs too, depended upon it. And therefore both the Love of their Maſter, and a Tenderneſs for themſelves, might reaſonably be thought to biaſs them in this Particular, and to make the Paſſage for ſuch an Opinion much more eaſy and open to their Minds. But now, When, in ſtead of all this, they ſeemed rather ſtupid and inſenſible, inſomuch that our Saviour reproaches *them with folly and ſlowneſs of underſtanding, nay with infidelity and hardneſs of Heart.* When they were ſo far from inclining to the Belief of it, as to be rather obſtinately bent againſt it, and ſtood out againſt all the Impreſſions of this Kind, with a ſort of reſolute Perverſeneſs: When they would neither credit one another, nor their own ſelves; but cavilled at every freſh Inſtance, and raiſed new Scruples, and new Difficulties perpetually; And yet, when afterwards theſe very Men were ſo firmly perſuaded of this, that they ſtaked down their Lives in Vindication of it: Theſe muſt needs be Conſiderations of mighty weight to eſtabliſh their Credit. For Theſe free them from all Imputation of Eaſineſs and Partiality: And we cannot in Reaſon have any thing to ſay, againſt ſuch Witneſſes; nor attribute their Confidence at laſt to any other Cauſe, than the powerful Evidence of Truth upon their own Conſciences. Who proceeded ſo warily, and ſo far renounced their own Intereſt, as to doubt every Circumſtance, and reſolve not to believe, till there was no Pretence left for the doubting any longer. They received nothing till it had been moſt critically enquired into:

Matth. xii. 16.

Luke xxx. 25.

And

And they ſtood out againſt thoſe Reports of credible Men, and of their own Senſes, which, if any Conſideration of Intereſt could have ſwayed them, they would have reconciled themſelves to the very firſt Moment. And more than this we cannot have, More we cannot ask, in any Witneſs, than Judgment, and Care, and Integrity: And all Theſe atteſted to by the Seal of the Holy Ghoſt, the Gift of Miracles from Heaven. So that, upon all Accounts, the Delays and Doubtings of the Apoſtles were of Mighty Advantage to this Doctrine of the Reſurrection. They gave Occaſion for more convincing and ſenſible Proofs of it to Themſelves; And they rendred them more competent and credible Atteſters of it to Others.

Theſe are Conſiderations exceeding proper for this Solemnity, to ſatisfie every Chriſtian, what a firm Foundation his Faith ſtands upon, and to put all its Enemies to confuſion. But, unleſs we do ſomething more than argue for our Saviour's Reſurrection, it had been the ſame thing to Us, if he had never riſen at all. The Second Leſſon for this Morning Service, and the Epiſtle for the Day, tell us largely, what uſe is to be made of this Article. That owning and being baptized into the belief of it implies our being conformed to the likeneſs of what our Saviour hath done. That We muſt riſe with him; and prove, that we do ſo, by *ſetting our our Affections on things above*; *That, as Chriſt was raiſed from the dead by the Glory of the Father, ſo We ſhould alſo walk in newneſs of Life*; Rom. vi. 4, 9, 10, 11. *That, as He died to Sin once, and now liveth unto God, ſo We ſhould reckon our Selves dead unto Sin, but alive unto God; Alive like Him, over whom the Law of Sin and Death hath no more dominion, and who returned not a ſecond time to Corruption.* Remember then, that Chriſt is riſen, but that They only will have comfort of his Riſing, who are thus riſen with him. The great Revolution of the whole World, its

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ſecond and better Creation to Immortality began this Day. But, if we have no part in it, by Reformation and a new Life, we are of all Men moſt Miſerable. Our Prince and King hath *overcome* indeed *the ſharpneſs of Death: But it is to Believers* only, that *he hath opened the Kingdom of Heaven.* And ſuch Believers are only They, who prove their Faith by their Works. And to thoſe he hath given a ſure Comfort, Such a One, as *neither Tribulation nor Diſtreſs, nor even Death it ſelf can rob them of.* For ſince their *Redeemer liveth, they are certain, that though, after their Skin Worms deſtroy this Body, yet there will come another Day, when in their Fleſh they ſhall ſee God.* Whom God grant us to behold, and *to ſee for our ſelves*, that is, for our own unſpeakable and everlaſting Happineſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

Eaſter Monday.

For the EPISTLE.

Acts x. 34.

34. THen Peter opened his mouth, and ſaid, Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons:

35. But in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him.

36. The word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt, (he is Lord of all)

37. That word (I ſay) you know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached:

38. How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil: for God was with him.

39. And we are witneſſes of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem, whom they ſlew and hanged on a tree.

40. Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly;

41. Not to all the people, but unto witneſſes, choſen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead.

42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtifie that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.

43. To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his Name whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.

The

The GOSPEL.

S. Luke xxiv. 13.

13. AND *behold, two of his disciples went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.*
14. *And they talked together of all these things which had happened.*
15. *And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.*
16. *But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.*
17. *And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*
18. *And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?*
19. *And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people.*
20. *And how the chief Priests, and our Rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.*
21. *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done,*
22. *Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre:*
23. *And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of Angels, which said that he was alive.*
24. *And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the woman had said, but him they saw not.*
25. *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken:*
26. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*
27. *And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*
28. *And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther.*
29. *But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent: and he went in to tarry with them.*
30. *And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.*
31. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.*
32. *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?*
33. *And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,*
34. *Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.*
35. *And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

COMMENT.

THE Proofs of our Bleſſed Lord's Reſurrection are Twofold: Conſiſting partly of Matter of Fact, and partly of the Agreement of that Fact with ancient Prophecies, concerning ſo very important an Event. Of the Former Sort I have treated already; and have there taken in the Hiſtorical part of the Epiſtles and Goſpels for this and the following Day. Which indeed do chiefly ſeem to turn upon the Latter Evidence; And therefore my Diſcourſes upon them ſhall be confined to That, and caſt into one continued Argument upon it.

Goſpel for Eaſter Day.

To This purpoſe we ſhall do well to obſerve; That, when by ſeveral demonſtrations of his being really alive, our Lord had rendred his Diſciples fit to hear Reaſon; he put them in mind, that the Events which they looked upon as altogether incredible, were no other than he, in his former Converſation with them, had very frequently aſſured them ſhould be brought to paſs: That they were in every point agreeable to the Prophecies delivered many Ages before. Thoſe Prophecies, which the *Jews* unanimouſly allowed to be intended of the Meſſias, and ſuch, as now they had ſeen exactly accompliſhed in Him, were an irrefragable Argument that He was that very Meſſias. Upon this he enlarges; And, by the Explanation of thoſe Scriptures, which related to Himſelf, as well as by the inward Aſſiſtances and Illuminations of his Grace, darted new Light into their Underſtandings, and ſhewed them the Correſpondence and exact Harmony of thoſe Predictions, with the things, which they could witneſs had happened to Him. The Streſs whereof lies in thoſe two Paſſages, which, from the mention of theſe former Prophecies, draws this Inference; *Ought not Chriſt to Suffer and to enter into his Glory?* And, again, *Thus it is written,*

Ver. 26, 27.

and

and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer and to riſe from the dead the third day. Ver. 44, 45, 46.

Thoſe Clauſes, *Thus it is written, and thus it is behoved*, may probably mean no more than this; that Chriſt muſt needs ſuffer and riſe again, becauſe the Scriptures concerning him could not otherwiſe have been true. And then the Argument is but One; That, after God had declared ſuch things concerning the Meſſiah, and made theſe the Marks, which the World was to diſtinguiſh him by, however ſtrange and ſurpriſing they might appear at firſt, yet, upon maturer Conſideration, it was eaſie for Men to ſatisfie themſelves, that they were unavoidably neceſſary, for vindicating the Truth of God, who had ſo long before given warning of them by the Prophets.

But, in truth, this Neceſſity was ſubordinate to another. For theſe things were therefore foretold, becauſe God had from all Eternity determined them. And they were determined, again, becauſe his infinite Wiſdom ſaw the fitneſs of them, and their ſubſerviency to the Great Ends of ſending the Meſſiah for the Redemption of Mankind. Therefore that Expreſſion, *Thus it behoved*, if it do not require, yet it may admit of, another Senſe, which makes it an Argument ſomewhat different from the former. And that is, That the Death and Reſurrection of *Jeſus* were in all points ſuitable to the Character of the Meſſiah; And, that the Scheme and Deſign of Man's Redemption could not have been ſo properly ſatisfied, by any other means, as by Theſe. See the Goſpel on Quinq. Sun.

This, I ſay, if it be not the moſt natural and neceſſary, is yet a very uſeful Conſtruction of that Expreſſion. But I ſhall not take the liberty of treating of it in this Latitude. And therefore limiting my ſelf to the former Senſe, what I have to ſay upon this Subject will conſiſt only of Two Heads.

I. *First*, I ſhall inſtance in ſome of the moſt material Paſſages, which it is reaſonable for us to ſuppoſe our Lord inſiſted upon; And,

II. *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew, wherein the Force of his Argument lay, in applying theſe, as Remedies to the Perplexities and Doubts of his Diſciples, at that time.

1. *First*, I ſhall inſtance in ſome of the moſt material Paſſages, which it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe our Lord made uſe of in the preſent Caſe. *He is ſaid to have begun with Moſes and all the Prophets, and to have expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning himſelf.* Ver. 27. Now, though it is poſſible he might open to them the Predictions relating to Other Matters and Actions of his Life, yet the main Difficulties then lying before them, and the only things mentioned here, being his Paſſion and Reſurrection, I ſhall confine my Diſcourſe to ſuch as foretel Theſe only. Nor ſhall I enlarge any farther upon Them, than to produce ſuch, at leaſt the principal of ſuch, as we find expreſly applied to this purpoſe, in the New Teſtament. For, ſince the Evangeliſt hath not told us particularly, what Prophecies our Lord inſiſted upon to convince them at this time, I cannot think it unreaſonable to preſume, that the Diſciples endeavoured to convince Others, by the ſame Scriptures, to which they owed their own Conviction. And therefore ſuch as we find them, either relating, as quoted by Our Lord before his Death, or elſe urging upon the *Jews* in their own Perſons afterwards; Such, I think, we may fairly preſume, had a place in Our Lord's Diſcourſe, deſigned to ſettle their Minds and remove their Doubts, and compoſe their Aſtoniſhment, occaſioned by his Death and Reſurrection.

I only add, before I enter upon Particulars, that there are Two ſorts of things, by which future Events were ſignified under the Old Teſtament. The One conſiſted in Words;

Words; The Other in Facts; And Theſe are therefore diſtinguiſhed by Predictions and Types. For what the Prophets did, was in ſome caſes reputed of equal Significance and Authority, with what they ſpoke; Both being allowed to proceed from the Impulſe and Direction of the ſame Divine Spirit, and, upon that account, to be as full of Myſtery, and to challenge the ſame regard. And accordingly we ſhall find Both appealed to, with reſpect to the matter now before Us. In handling which I ſhall conſider Each apart; and ſhew, in This Diſcourſe, what Intimation was given by Both, that Chriſt muſt Suffer; and in my Next, that he muſt Riſe again from the dead the third day.

As to the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt, the Propheeies, produced in Scripture, are very many, and ſo copious and expreſs, as to reach every material Circumſtance relating to them. That he ſhould be betrayed by a particular Friend, One that was ſuſtained by his Bounty, and retained to him; *David* hath foretold in the 41ſt *Pſalm*, which *Jeſus* applies to himſelf, *John* xiii. 18, 19. *I ſpeak not of you all, I know whom I have Choſen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth Bread with me hath lifted up his Heel againſt me. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am He.* And again, *Matth.* xxvi. 23, 24. to the Diſciples Queſtion, who it was that ſhould betray Him; he anſwered and ſaid; *He that dippeth his Hand with me in the Diſh, the ſame ſhall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but Wo to that Man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.*

And St. *Peter*, in the *Firſt* of the *Acts*, is expreſs, that ſome of thoſe Imprecations in the 69th and 109th *Pſalms*, had *Judas* his Tranſgreſſion and the falling from his Apoſtleſhip, in view; To which likewiſe our Saviour is probably Acts i. 16, 21.

thought to allude, when he ſays, *Thoſe whom thou gaveſt me* have *I kept, and none of them is loſt, but the Son of Perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* The Potters Field being bought with the thirty pieces of Silver, and His being ſold for ſo vile a Price, is by St. *Matthew* referred to an old Prophecy. *Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken, They took the thirty pieces of Silver, the Price of him that was valued, whom they of the Children of Iſrael did value*; or as it is in the Old Teſtament, *(A goodly price that He was valued at by them) And gave them for the Potters Field, as the Lord appointed me.*

John xvii. 12.

Matth. xxvii. 9, 10.

Zech. xi. 12, 14.

The Fears and Confuſion of his Diſciples are by our Lord himſelf declared to be an accompliſhment of another Paſſage in the ſame Prophet, *Matth.* xxvi. 31. *Then ſaith Jeſus unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night, for it is written, I will ſmite the Shepherd, and the Sheep of the Flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad.*

Zech. xiii. 7.

The infamous manner of his Death, and the profligate Companions of his Sufferings, St. *Mark* obſerves to fall in exactly with the deſcription given of it by *Iſaiah* many Ages before, *With him they crucified two Thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left:* And *the Scripture was fulfilled which ſaith, And he was numbred among the Tranſgreſſors.*

Compare Luke xxii. 37.

David, deſcribing the Barbarity of his Enemies, ſays, *They parted his Garments among them, and upon his Veſture did they caſt lots.* But St. *John* informs us, that thoſe Words had a much more diſtant Proſpect; and how ſtrangely the Avarice of the Soldiers, and the particular form of *Jeſus* his Clothes, concurred to give them their due and ultimate Completion, *John* xix. 23, 24. *Then the Soldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus,*

ſus, took his Garments and made four parts, to every Soldier a part, and alſo his Coat. Now the Coat was without Seam, woven from the top throughout. They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rend it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, They parted my Raiment among them, and upon my Veſture did they caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the Soldiers did.

Our Lord, in his dying Agonies, made uſe of the very Words of *David* in the 22d *Pſalm*, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* In which *Pſalm* that Tragical Scene is painted to the Life, and the very Taunts of his reviling Enemies are repeated: As if it were a melancholy Poem, deſcribing a Death already paſt, rather than a prediction of one to come above a thouſand Years after. And laſtly, juſt before our Lord expired, He cried *I thirſt*. But this was done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled (ſays St. *John* Chap. xix. 28.) For the ſame *David*, *Pſalm* lxix. 22. complains thus, *They gave me Gall to eat, and when I was thirſty, they gave me Vinegar to drink.* Now this was never ſtrictly and literally true, except in the caſe of this Son of *David*, For to him *they ran, and filled a Spunge, and gave him Vinegar to drink mingled with Gall.*

Once more, That impertinent Malice of the Roman Soldier, who wounded his dead Body with a Spear, was another Circumſtance too, correſponding with an ancient Prophecy, in which this very Act was fulfilled, in thoſe Words quoted by St. *John* from *Zechariah, They ſhall look on Me whom they have pierced.* John xix. 37. Zech. xii. 10.

The foundation of the Eunuchs Converſion was laid in a Text of *Iſaiah*; And *Philip* could not begin, at any more appoſite Scripture, to bring him over to *Jeſus*, than that, which Providence ordered, that he ſhould juſt then be reading; *He was led as a Sheep to the ſlaughter, and like a Lamb dumb be-* Iſaiah liii.

fore his Shearers, ſo *opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; And who ſhall declare his Generation, for his Life is taken from the Earth?*

And, as in theſe laſt Words, that Prophet foretold the Meekneſs and invincible Patience of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, under ſo injurious a Death; So did he likewiſe, the great Charity and main Deſign of it, and how a Perſon ſo Innocent, ſo Divine, came to endure ſo bitter things. That This was a Diſpenſation of God for the benefit of ſinful Man, to lay on him the burthen of the Puniſhment of thoſe Tranſgreſſions, which muſt otherwiſe have ſunk the guilty Committers into irrecoverable Miſery and Deſtruction. For if we look into the 5th and 6th Verſes of that famous 53d of *Iſaiah*, we ſhall find, that St. *Peter* does but take the Prophet's Words into his own Mouth, when he gives this account of Chriſt, in the *Second* of his Firſt Epiſtle at the 24th. *Who his own ſelf bore our Sins, in his own Body on the Tree; that we being dead to Sin ſhould live to Righteouſneſs: By whoſe Stripes ye were healed; For ye were as Sheep going aſtray.* So the Apoſtle. Now obſerve the Prophet eight hundred Years before; Surely *he hath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our Iniquities, the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone aſtray, we have turned every one to his own way, And the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.*

Theſe, I think, may more than ſuffice for Verbal Predictions of our Lord's Paſſion; I ſhall inſtance in *Two* or *Three* of the other ſort, Figures and Types, taken notice of in the New Teſtament; And They are Theſe.

The *Firſt* I ſhall mention, is, The Paſchal Lamb; Appointed to be ſlain, and the Blood of it ſprinkled upon the Doors of every Iſraelite, in the Night when God

ſlew

ſlew all the Firſt-born in *Egypt*. And the Uſe of this was, to ſecure the Inhabitants, where this Blood was ſprinkled, from all the dire Effects of the deſtroying Angel. Now the like Benefit accrues to Chriſtians by the Blood of *Jeſus*. St. *John* calls him *the Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of the World*, and ſays, *he hath waſhed us in his own Blood*. St. *Paul*, that *we are reconciled to God by his Blood*. And that *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us*. And St. *John* once more takes notice, that, *when the Soldiers came to take down the Malefactors from the Croſs, they broke the Legs of the two Thieves crucified with Jeſus*. But, *when they came to Him, and ſaw that He was dead already, they broke not his Legs*. Which he attributes to a very particular Providence, for *theſe things were done*, ſays he, *that the Scripture ſhould be fulfilled, A Bone of him ſhall not be broken*. It ſeems then, That Scripture had not been fulfilled, if any Bone of *Jeſus* had been broken. But that Scripture is one of the Precepts concerning the Paſſover in the *Twelfth* of *Exodus*, and was conſtantly obſerved by the Jews, in their Celebration of it. Since therefore this Scripture required and found its full and laſt Completion in Chriſt; Some Account there muſt be of the Concern he had in it. And This can be no other, than the mutual Relation between the Jewiſh Lamb and Him; That as the Shadow, Him as the Subſtance; And conſequently, He is the true, the univerſal Paſſover; that turns away the Wrath of God, and, by the Merit of his Sacrifice, delivers them that have part in him, from the Deſtruction of the reprobate and wicked.

John i. 29. Rev. i. 5. Rom. iii. 5. 1 Cor. v. 8. John xix. 32, 33, 36.

Another Image of Chriſt was the Sin-offering inſtituted by the Jewiſh Law, which (I have proved already) as upon other Occaſions, ſo eſpecially upon the Great Day of Atonement, was to reconcile them to God. And the Manner of it was (it hath been ſaid) to bring

the

the Blood into the Sanctuary, and ſprinkle it before the Lord, but to burn the Body without the Camp. With Allusion to this, Chriſt is not only called our *Peace*, and ſaid to be *made Sin for us*: But more particularly, The ſame Ceremonies are obſerved to be nicely regarded in the Place and Manner of his Death. For thus the Author to the *Hebrews* argues, *The Bodies of thoſe Beaſts, whoſe Blood is brought into the Sanctuary for Sin, are burnt without the Camp. Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the People with his own Blood, ſuffered without the Gate.*

Chap. xiii. 11, 12.

One more remarkable Type there is, denoting both the Kind and the Efficacy of this Death. When the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs were ſtung with fiery Serpents, *Moſes* was commanded to ſet a Brazen Serpent, reſembling thoſe in Form, on high upon a Pole; And as many as looked upon This, were healed of their Plague. Our Lord, in like manner, though made in the Likeneſs of Sinful Fleſh, yet knew no Sin himſelf; As that Brazen Serpent had the Reſemblance only, but none of the Fire and Venom of thoſe Serpents, whoſe Sting it was ordained to cure. Nor did the fixing it in view effect a Recovery, by any natural and neceſſary Operation; but the Benefit of Healing was confined to Them, that fix'd their Eyes upon it, and, conſequent to that, *turned themſelves to this Sign of Salvation*, (as the Wiſdom of *Solomon* expreſſes it) Which made them capable of the Mercy of God, working in, and by, that Emblem. Thus is the Death of Chriſt effectual for curing the Sins of Men; Not of All indifferently and without Diſtinction, but of ſuch as qualify themſelves by Faith. All which cannot be more fully illuſtrated, than in that Paſſage in our Lord's Diſcourſe with *Nicodemus*, (John iii. 14, 15.) *As Moſes lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up; That whoſoever believeth on Him,*

Wiſd. xvi. 6, 7.

ſhould

ſhould not periſh, but have eternal Life. And that there is a peculiar Propriety, in that Phraſe of being *lifted up*, with regard to the Crucifixion of our Bleſſed Saviour, the ſame Evangeliſt hath inſtructed us (Ch. xii. 32, 33.) who upon the Occaſion of thoſe Words, *And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all Men unto me*; adds by way of Explanation to this Term, *This ſaid Jeſus, ſignifying what Death he ſhould die.* Let this ſuffice for Proof, that Thus it was written, and Thus it behoved Chriſt to Suffer. That there was the ſame Neceſſity, and upon the ſame Account, for his Riſing again, ſhall be the Subject of to Morrow's Meditations.

Eaſter Tueſday.

For the EPISTLE.

Acts xiii. 26.

26. *MEN and brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the Word of this Salvation ſent.*

27. *For they that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

28. *And though they found no cauſe of death in him, yet deſired they Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain.*

29. *And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a ſepulchre.*

30. *But God raiſed him from the dead.*

31. *And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jeruſalem, who are his witneſſes unto the people.*

32. *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promiſe which was made unto the fathers,*

33. *God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again, as it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

34. *And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure Mercies of David.*

35. *Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another Pſalm, Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption.*

36. For David, after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God fell on ſleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption:
37. But he whom God raiſed again ſaw no corruption.
38. Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins.
39. And by him all that believe, are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.
40. Beware therefore, leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the Prophets,
41. Behold, ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh: for I work a work in your days, a work which you ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you.

The GOSPEL.

Luke xxiv. 36.

36. JESUS himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them Peace be unto you.
37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit.
38. And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts?
39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my ſelf: handle me and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have.
40. And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them his hands and his feet.
41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondred, he ſaid unto them, Have ye here any meat?
42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fiſh, and of an hony comb.
43. And he took it, and did eat before them.
44. And he ſaid unto them, Theſe are the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moſes, and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms concerning me.
45. Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the Scriptures.
46. And ſaid unto them, Thus it is writen, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day:
47. And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his Name among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem.
48. And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.

COMMENT.

COMMENT.

I Now proceed, according to my Propoſal Yeſterday, to conſider the Predictions and Types of our Bleſſed Redeemer's Reſurrection. And that, both as to the Thing in general, and as to the particular Time of it. For the Scriptures before us now extend to Both, That he *ſhould riſe from the dead*, and, That he ſhould riſe the Third Day.

Almighty God had promiſed to *Abraham*, *That in his Seed all Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*; *This Seed*, St. *Paul* affirms to the *Galatians*, *is Chriſt, who redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us, That the Bleſſing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt.* And St. *Peter* acquaints the Jews, that this Promiſe was made good to them in our Lord's Reſurrection (*Acts* iii. 25, 26.) *Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant, which God made with our Fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy Seed ſhall all the Kindreds of the Earth be bleſſed. Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his Iniquities.*

Gen. xii. 3. Gal. iii. 13, 14, 16.

David, in the *Second Pſalm*, magnifying the Mercy of God in his Son's Exaltation to the Throne, had ſaid, I will declare the Decree, the *Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* And St. *Paul*, making the Epiſtle for this Day his Sermon in the Synagogue at *Antioch*, contends for this, as the true Senſe of theſe Words. *We declare unto you Glad Tidings*, ſays he, *how that the Promiſe, which was made unto the Fathers God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their Children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; As it is alſo written in the Second Pſalm, Thou art my Son, this Day*

Acts xiii. 32, 33.

have

have I begotten thee. And, that this Pſalm had a peculiar Reference to the *Meſſias*, we learn from the Alluſion made to it, by the whole College of the Apoſtles, in the *Fourth* Chapter of the ſame Book.

The ſame Royal Prophet, in another Place, is carried out into Raptures of Truſt and Holy Hope, which could not with Propriety of Speech belong to any but Chriſt, and therefore in His Perſon we are to underſtand thoſe Words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption.* The Application whereof to the Matter now in hand S. *Peter* vindicates thus, in his Sermon on the Day of Pentecoſt, *Men and Brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the Patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his Sepulchre is with Us unto this Day; Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing, that God had ſworn with an Oath to him, that of the Fruit of his Loins, according to the Fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his Throne: He, ſeeing this before ſpake of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, that His Soul was not left in Hell, neither did His Body ſee Corruption.* And St. *Paul* in like manner here to the Jews at *Antioch, David after he had ſerved his own Generation, by the Will of God, fell aſleep, and ſaw Corruption; But He whom God raiſed up again ſaw no Corruption.*

Acts ii. 29, 30, 31.

Acts xiii. 36, 37.

But, In our Saviour's Reſurrection, there was One particular Privilege, which diſtinguiſhed Him from any other Perſon, miraculouſly brought to Life again; 'Tis, that They only were called back, and, as it were, reprieved, for a certain Term of Time, but ſtill continued ſubject to Mortality; And, when that Period was expired, returned to their dark Priſons of the Grave, there to remain confined, till the General Gaol Delivery at the great Aſſizes of the whole World. But Chriſt, as St. *Paul* obſerves, *being raiſed from the Dead, dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion*

Rom. vi. 9.

Dominion over Him. And this peculiar Exception that Apoſtle obſerves to have been punctually foretold by *Iſaiah*. *And, as concerning that God raiſed him up from the dead, now no more to return to Corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure Mercies of David.* Iſai. lv. 3. Acts xiii. 34.

Now by theſe *ſure Mercies of David*, are meant thoſe Bleſſings, for which Almighty God had engaged his Truth; and of the full Attainment whereof *David* ſo often expreſſes his entire Confidence. Particularly That of an everlaſting Kingdom, to be continued to His Poſterity. Which having manifeſtly failed in the firſt and temporal Senſe, It follows, that this Promiſe muſt have a ſecond and more ſublime Senſe belonging to it. Such as imports a Spiritual and Eternal Kingdom; The ſame which *Iſaiah* foreſaw, in his Ninth Chapter; And which the Holy Angel at our Saviour's Incarnation declared, ſhould be veſted in the wonderful Son of that Virgin-Mother. *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt. And the Lord God ſhall give unto Him the Throne of his Father David; And he ſhall reign over the Houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there ſhall be no End.* Luke i. 32, 33. Iſai. ix. 7. Acts v. 30, 31. This Inveſtiture the Apoſtles declare to have commenced from his Reſurrection; *The God of our Fathers*, ſay they to the Jewiſh Sanhedrim, *hath raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a Tree, Him hath God exalted with his Right Hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.* Now from hence it follows, that he could not riſe to die a Second Time, becauſe ſuch Death muſt put a Period to his Reign; And conſequently, That Kingdom not being everlaſting, theſe Mercies of *David* were not ſure; that is, The Promiſe would not be made good, in the juſt Extent and moſt valuable Senſe of it.

As to the particular time of our Lord's Reſurrection, though ſome Paſſages in the Prophets are very juſtly in-

terpreted of it; Yet, becauſe I find no expreſs Application of them, by the Writers of the New Teſtament; I ſhall content my ſelf with that One Type, produced by Chriſt himſelf to the *Jews*, which at once prefigured both the Thing, and this Circumſtance of it. And this was ſo remarkable, that our Lord refers that obſtinate People hither, as to the laſt, and moſt awakening Miracle, which God reſerved for their Conviction, and would hold Them inexcuſable, upon whom it ſhould have no effect. As *Jonas was three days and three nights in the Whale's Belly, ſo ſhall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth. The Men of Nineveh ſhall riſe in the Judgment with this Generation, and ſhall condemn it*; for they *repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here.*

Matth. xii. 39, 40.

Thus have I laid before you Some of the Principal Prophecies and Types, by which God ſignified long before, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſuffer and riſe again from the dead, ſuch as, we may probably conjecture, our Lord expounded in his Conferences with the Diſciples; Becauſe we find them inſiſted upon afterwards, in Their Reaſonings with the *Jews*. It were very eaſie to enlarge yet more, by producing Others of the ſame kind, with reference to the Other parts of our Lord's Exaltation, and the Adminiſtration of his Spiritual Kingdom. But I confine my ſelf to theſe two Subjects of his Death and Reſurrection, as proper to this Seaſon. I ſhall now deſcend briefly to the *Second* Branch of my Diviſion upon it, which is,

2. To ſhew wherein the Strength of this Argument, drawn from ſuch Predictions and Prefigurations, conſiſts; And upon what account it was proper for bringing over theſe Diſciples, to a belief of *Jeſus* therefore being the *Chriſt*, becauſe he did actually thus ſuffer, and thus riſe again from the dead.

Now in order hereunto we muſt obſerve,

1. *Firſt*, That the Perſons, to whom our Lord directed this Diſcourſe, had been all along bred up in the Knowledge and Practice of the Jewiſh Religion, and received the Writings of the Old Teſtament, as the Oracles of God, and the Rule and Standard of their Faith. And the greater their Skill in theſe things was, the more firm their Perſuaſion would be of a *Meſſias* to come. One, who ſhould fulfil all the glorious things ſpoken of him there; and was to be known and diſtinguiſhed from all falſe Pretenders, by doing ſo. For of the Chriſt thoſe Words of *Moſes* are to be underſtood, and were conſtantly underſtood by the Ancient Jews. *A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your Brethren like unto Me, him ſhall ye hear. And it ſhall come to paſs, that every Soul which hearkeneth not unto that Prophet, ſhall be cut off from his People.* Since then their Obedience to this great Prophet was enjoined under ſo ſevere a Penalty; It muſt needs be, that God left them not utterly in the Dark in this moſt important Affair; but gave them ſome particular Marks and Characters, by which they might be able to diſcern that Prophet, to whom ſuch Obedience was due.

See Goſpel on Quinquageſima Sunday.

Deut. xviii. Acts iii.

2. *Secondly*, It is likewiſe obſervable, that the Jews acknowledged and underſtood theſe Signs of the *Meſſiah*, as incommunicable to any Other. Hence is that Saying, *When Chriſt cometh, Will He do more Miracles than theſe which this Man hath done?* Hence the Appeal our Lord makes to his Miracles, in order to ſatisfie that Queſtion of *John*'s Diſciples, *Art thou he which ſhould come, or do we look for another?* The plain meaning whereof is, both, that One famous Perſon was expected, entitled by way of Eminence, *He that ſhould come*; and alſo, that the Greatneſs, and Number, and Quality of

his Miracles, were a ſufficient token, to point, and ſingle him out, when he did come. So that our Lord's Argument, (as I have formerly obſerved) lies thus. He, who does thoſe many and mighty Wonders foretold by the Prophets, is He that ſhould come. Your own Senſes are Judges whether I have done theſe Wonders or no. And therefore, if your Senſes convince you that I have wrought ſuch things, there cannot remain any reaſonable doubt, but that I am He that ſhould come.

3. *Thirdly*, Allowing ſome ſuch Characters to be laid down concerning the *Meſſiah*; It will follow, that, if any of theſe Prophecies were in ſome Senſe fulfilled in any of the eminent Men of old, yet there was ſtill another and ſublimer Senſe, peculiar to the *Meſſiah*, which, till it was fulfilled in Him, the utmoſt intent of thoſe Prophecies was not Satisfied. And this is the Method taken by the Apoſtles, particularly by St. *Peter*, and St. *Paul*, in their Diſcourſes upon our Lord's Reſurrection; to prove, that the Paſſages of *David* and *Iſaiah* were not fully made good in the Perſons that ſpoke them; or in their firſt and moſt immediate Signification; Conſequently that, ſuppoſing a double Senſe, and Them to have any part in them, they had another Perſon in view, who ſhould give them their utmoſt accompliſhment. And till that were done, the Truth of God, who dictated thoſe Expreſſions, had not diſcharged it ſelf. That there were many Predictions relating to the *Meſſiah*, is a Principle confeſſed by the *Jews*. Either therefore the *Meſſiah* was never Propheſied of, nor Prefigured at all by ſuch; which the *Jews* will not all agree in; Or elſe, ſome Prophecies and Prefigurations contained in the Old Teſtament, will require, and do contain, a future and myſtical, in the opinion of Them, who admit a preſent and ſtricter, Interpretation. And if ſo, then that Perſon, in whom that higheſt

and

and ultimate Conſtruction is accompliſhed, ought to be received, as the promiſed *Meſſiah*. And, that this was a method of expounding the Old Teſtament received among the *Jews*, ſeems probable from hence; That when our Lord and his Apoſtles made uſe of it, the Enemies of the Goſpel are never ſaid to have objected againſt it, as an unfair way of arguing. The Evaſions of this Nature being only ſuch miſerable Shifts, as the *Jews* of later Ages have taken Sanctuary in. Who, to cover their incorrigible Unbelief, have thrown off thoſe Texts, which heretofore were univerſally acknowledged to point at the Chriſt. So that

4. *Fourthly*, The Whole turns at laſt upon the Veracity of Almighty God, the Divine Authority of the Prophetick Writings; and the Agreement of what happened to our *Jeſus*, with thoſe remarkable things foretold of the *Meſſiah*. If God be true, Whatever He hath declared ſhall be, muſt certainly come to paſs. If the Prophets wrote, as they were inſpired and directed by the Holy Ghoſt; Whatever they have laid down concerning the *Meſſiah* muſt needs be accompliſhed in His Perſon. But the Prophets did declare, That the *Meſſiah* ſhould be cut off from the land of the living; That He ſhould die under ſuch and ſuch Circumſtances; That, after He was thus dead, He ſhould riſe again. The Perſon therefore, who in all points made good theſe Predictions, is undoubtedly the Chriſt. Now *Jeſus* did thus die, and thus riſe again; No other Perſon beſides himſelf ever did ſo; And conſequently *Jeſus*, and no other Perſon, is the *Chriſt* of God. Since therefore theſe Diſciples confeſſed, that ſuch things were dictated by God Himſelf, and foretold of the *Meſſiah*; And ſince they ſaw them punctually made good in their own Maſter; His Sufferings and Death ought not to diſcourage or weaken their Faith, becauſe theſe were neceſſary to the Character and Office of Chriſt. And, had he not ſo

ſuffered

ſuffered and died, he could not poſſibly have been the Chriſt. But in regard the ſame Perſon ſo deſcribed heretofore to ſuffer and die, was likewiſe foretold to riſe again the third day; The demonſtrations he had now given them, upon that very day from his Death, of his being actually Riſen, were an irrefragable Evidence, that all the glorious Benefits, which the World was to expect from the promiſed *Meſſiah*, were to be depended upon from, and would moſt aſſuredly be found in, *Jeſus*. So that they might boldly witneſs theſe things to the World, and preach *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins in his Name.* In His, I ſay, who died for the Sins of Mankind, *and roſe again for their Juſtification.*

To whom with the Father and Holy Spirit be all Honour and Glory for evermore, *Amen.*

FINIS.



The Reader is deſired to correct theſe following Errours that diſturb the Senſe.

PAge 2. in Paraph. after 3. dele *For.* p. 22. l. 29. for *are* r. *is.* p. 45. l. 11. r. *Experiment.* p. 65. l. 22. r. *Seem.* p. 148. at the end of verſe 13. dele *Theſe.* p. 159. l. 12. for *and* r. *or.* Falſe Page from 153. to 160. p. 194. l. 24. r. *Sully'd.* p. 198. l. 27. after *Brethren* r. *without any other Object to divert the former.* p. 209. l. 24. after *That* r. *which muſt forſake him one day.* p. 213. Par. on V. 25. r. *ought we to.* p. 280. l. 19. for *Paul's* r. *Peter's.* p. 305. l. 29. r. *a Rival.* p. 315. l. 10. r. *keeps.* 19. for *reſts* r. *Acts.* p. 319. l. 18. r. *before the face.* p. 332. l. laſt but two r. *Paraphraſe.* p. 367. l. 35. r. *practicable.* p. 439. l. 24. for *his* r. *our* p. 465. l. 17. r. *his Life.* p. 477. l. laſt r. *ought it.* p. 478 l. 11. r. *what We.* p. 511. l. 16. r. *we ſhould.* p. 536. l. 3. r. *that although.* p. 582. l. 2. r. *the thinneſs.* p. 591. l. 11. *Conſciences.* p. 611. l. 3. r. *thus it behoved.*